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ABSTRACT

A study examined the vocational guidance needs of low-skilled young people in Italy. Research studies on the topics of guidance as a process of transmission, processing, and acquisition of knowledge and skills and the situation and life circumstances of young people were reviewed. The role of guidance within a framework of lifelong education and support for various transition processes were discussed. The main conclusions were as follows: the use of guidance structures and opportunities by low-skilled youths is heavily influenced by socioenvironmental context and the "culture" present in that context; a global approach to young people's living conditions encourages development of participation by population groups with low levels of culture and schooling; and development of participation and the global approach to problems determine the development of forms of positive discrimination in favor of low-skilled youth and a general push toward equal opportunities. Four recommendations regarding developing guidance services for low-skilled young Italians were presented. (Contains 95 references. Appended are 29 tables of data regarding exclusion of low-skilled young Italians from work and school.) (MN)

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Determining the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community

Low-skilled young people
- Italy -

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Determining the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community

Low-skilled young people
- Italy -

Saul Meghnagi

December 1993

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Preface by CEDEFOP

In developing the careers of young people and integrating them into working life, career guidance is becoming increasingly important. Persistent, structurally-caused unemployment, higher qualification requirements, complex training paths with eased transition between initial and continuing training, the increasing deregulation of the labour market and the emergence of new values and life styles among young people present career guidance services, as the instrument for regulating supply and demand on training, education and labour markets, with fundamental and complex tasks. At the same time, European integration poses new challenges to the career guidance services in the Member States. The PETRA 3 programme has taken an initial step in this direction through setting up European-oriented national resource centres, through organizing transitional continuing training courses for occupational guidance counsellors and publishing the "European Manual for Occupational Guidance Counsellors".

The comparative studies[1] carried out by CEDEFOP and Task Force: Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth to support and monitor work in this field have increased transparency in national occupational guidance systems and qualification structures.

The activities and research work carried out aimed primarily to make proposals or provide support for improving occupational guidance activities, to focus such work in a European context on the basis of existing national structures. Counselling requirements were deduced from existing or forecasted demand (enquiries at guidance services) or from general data derived from labour market and occupational research.

To date the needs of various target groups of young people based on their economic and social and cultural situation, their values, their career plans, their conception of the efficiency of occupational guidance offers etc. have not been taken into account.

This issue was examined in the project "Determination of (occupational) guidance needs for various groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Union", carried out between March 1993 and May 1994, the results of which are now available (12 national reports, in the original language and English, partly in French, the synthesis report in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish).

A total of 21 target groups were examined; nine of the reports examined two of the groups and three reports examined one target group. Particular attention was devoted to young people at a particular disadvantage who had no or inadequate access to occupational guidance services. The target groups selected are listed in the appendices of the 12 national reports and the synthesis report as the aims and findings of the project - as stressed in the synthesis report - can only be viewed in the context of the interrelationships between the various elements. The national reports have been published in separate editions as certain readers are interested

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[1] Occupational profiles and training in occupational guidance counselling, CEDEFOP, 1992, 12 national studies and synthesis report.
Educational and vocational guidance services for youth and young adults in the EC, European Commission, 1993, 12 national reports and synthesis report. As a supplement:
EUROCOUNSEL, Counselling and long-term unemployment, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, 1992-1993, 6 national studies and synthesis report.

in specific target groups whose problems in finding training and work have supra-national features which are characteristic of other target groups which we selected.

This project was commissioned by Task Force: Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth as part of the PETRA 3 programme aiming to produce indicators for differentiated and demand-oriented occupational guidance practices and to create more offensive planning strategies to reach as far as possible those target groups which were excluded from guidance counselling for the reasons contained in the reports. New proposals are being formulated at present to prepare the gradual transition to the "LEONARDO DA VINCI Programme".

Enrique Retuerto de la Torre
Deputy Director

Gesa Chomé
Project Coordinator

Foreword

Pedagogical research on guidance linked to occupational integration and vocational skills has not developed in the same way as that on the basic education of children or young people. In addition to this, studies, which can rarely be cross-referenced or compared, have tackled the issue of guidance by referring almost exclusively to the school environment and have linked the examination of skills to specific occupations, without considering the social dimension.

The result of this is that it is usually difficult to draw comparisons between the different periods and environments of people's lives and educations, and that there is, in particular, some considerable uncertainty concerning the identification of ways of working with young people who are having difficulty in moving into adult life. The sector is, then, characterized by a broad spectrum of diverse measures that vary not simply from one country to another but also within the policies of a single country. These measures often take the form of piecemeal actions rather than being part of a coherent strategy: from computer-literacy schemes to attempts to encourage the rediscovery of basic skills, from income-support schemes to specific training to enable people to use those skills, from guidance to "refresher courses", they are all attempts - often generous ones - to alleviate the problems faced by people who have been forced to move out of the training system too early.

This has happened despite the considerable contributions of several research programmes that have shown that one of the most disastrous results of early exclusion from the training system is the difficulty of developing re-entry schemes for people who are interested in positive experiences of training or work. There is also still no clear definition of the meaning of "skills", whether occupational or social, or, in particular, of "low skilled".

The attempt to reach a definition, on the basis of these considerations, is not,

however, a simple academic exercise concerning a fact that might seem readily comprehensible or describable. Rather, from an educational point of view, it would seem vital, if we wish to undertake a more precise examination of research work and practical experiences, that measures be taken to develop more effective communication between employees, a more precise dialogue between experts in the field.

For this reason, this report begins with an analysis of guidance as an educational process, with specific reference being made to the most recent research on the subject of the transmission, processing and acquisition of knowledge and skills. We look at some pieces of research connected with the distribution of time, the features of unemployment, and exclusion; we redefine the reference terms of "low skilled", "young people", "guidance" and "needs"; and we offer some concluding hypotheses.

1. Guidance as a training process: a theoretical framework

The purpose of this chapter is to launch an examination of guidance as an integral part of the educational activities undertaken both by official educational institutions and on the basis of unofficial or informal methods of intervention.

Our intention here is to define a reference framework that makes it possible to move beyond the notion that guidance must necessarily be limited to the provision of information, with all the cultural and material resources available being concentrated solely on this aspect.

Our underlying hypothesis is that guidance is the result of a process of moulding knowledge, skills and experience that may have been acquired in a variety of ways.

1.1. An active, constructive process

Skills and knowledge are acquired in every life situation in which we find ourselves developing know-how and abilities that may be linked either to our day-to-day lives or to scientific research and may vary in their degree of formal acknowledgement or foundation on logical premises.

The acquisition of knowledge and skills is not the result of a mechanical, cumulative process in which the content of learning is slavishly consumed by the learner. Rather, it is the outcome of complicated learning procedures that we can hope to understand only if our examination of cognitive and mental processes takes account of the life situations in which these processes take place. Living and working conditions must be seen as the source of unstructured knowledge and experiences that are absorbed and processed.

If we adhere to existing theories, the learning process may be seen as a mental activity in which the learner reconstructs and redefines his or per particular relationship with reality. Also, every society allows, to varying degrees, for the coexistence of the different value systems, ways of being and ways of thinking that may emerge as a result of the diversity of people's economic and social situations, the features of gender and class, and linguistic, ethnic, demographic and generational differences. Similarly, the definition of any educational scheme must be based on a combination of investigations into training processes, a theoretical framework that takes account of the underlying values and aims of the actions to be taken, planning considerations and the educational content to be included - all of which tend to take the form determined by the cultural outlook of the society concerned. On this premise, we can argue that any acquisition of knowledge and skills, and even guidance itself, are both social, that is, the result of a process of cultural transmission that is linked to the processes of change, definition and redefinition inherent in the culture concerned, and individual, in that the way in which certain contents or arguments are received will depend on the individual's previous experiences, with a resultant heterogeneity in the way in which people access knowledge and skills.

This approach highlights the complexity of the relationship between structured knowledge and lived experiences, thus making it difficult for us to assume that a particular subject of knowledge will be adequately assimilated if we do not understand how other subjects, drawn in from the outside, have been structured in the individual's perceptive and cognitive framework and are impacting on his or her behaviour, abilities and value system.

Study of the human mind has shown that we are constantly processing information and has made it possible to distinguish and identify different but interrelated phases in the processing, refining, storage and retrieval of knowledge; it has made it possible to define the various roles played in the performance of complex cognitive

processes by comprehension, memory, reasoning and problem-solving; and it has made it possible to identify ways and means of encouraging and refining these processes.

Study of the human mind has shown that cognition and cognitive development interact on the basis of experience, gained in various contexts, that encourages the linking of new knowledge with what is already known through cognitive processes that depend on, among other things, the reference framework according to which the individual gives meaning to the content of his or her experiences.

In this process, memory plays a special organizational function that is both general and personal. Neisser (1982) showed that memory allows self-identification, both at the most basic level of having a name, an address, etc, and at the most complex level of having a personal history, some of which remains at the conscious level and some of which is forgotten or suppressed; memory makes personal growth possible, because it allows us to re-examine, critically assess and redefine recent and past experiences; it takes on public significance in all the formal acts we are required to perform, such as, for example, bearing legal testimony; it may be linked both to personal experience and to "second-hand" experience of situations lived by other people, in which case it may emerge either from the immediate context of social relations or from analysis and historical reflection of varying degrees of formality; it is involved in all our day-to-day actions, be they automatic or conscious and willed, but it is especially implied in all our activities, depending on the type of intellectual input required. Also, the content of memory is dependent upon the meaning the individual invests in the events being recorded (eg religious, aesthetic, professional).

The significance of memory is, therefore, undeniable, since it is not a purely mechanical function but is linked to the strategies individuals adopt, on their previous cognitive experiences and on the value they attribute to events of varying

significance in their life. These events may be "striking or incisive" (*ibid*), they may produce images that become blurred over time or they may leave deep and significant traces in the way the individual observes, analyses and judges reality. This means that memory is not only significant as regards personal methods of processing new experiences but that it also has emotional and affective, as well as cognitive, implications, which will be proportionate to how deeply felt the original experience was.

To generate a skill on the basis of experience and the contribution of new knowledge gained, for example, through the provision of information implies an interaction with a complex system of knowledge that is based on experience and on the progressive processing and systemization of that experience.

In the field of cognitive research, which is our reference point here (see Meghnagi, 1992), a broad range of studies have been conducted that clarify the way in which skills are acquired, with a view to explaining how knowledge is organized, retrieved and applied. The information gained in this field has emerged from studies of complicated tasks and processes linked to the formation of concepts, comprehension, linguistic development and problem-solving and, on a more general level, abilities that are connected with those fostered in the educational environment. This approach marks a decisive break with former practices, in which researchers made use of meaningless material in order to eliminate any possibility of experiments being influenced by people's prior learning. Now, instead, the incidence and influence of knowledge and skills already possessed by participants are assessed and used to aid understanding of the dynamics that occur in analogous situations. Emphasis is also being given to the study of interactions between new skills and previous knowledge, analysis of the relationship between cognitive activities and variables brought into play for the purposes of learning, and examination, in "natural" conditions, of the processes whereby structures of knowledge are acquired and integrated and of the mechanisms that allow the

processing of information.

Cognitive research on learning all points to the constructive nature of the process, whereby acquisition of the ability to perform tasks of varying complexity is never simply a case of storing information but is rather a question of connecting the new information to other information already present in the individual's long-term memory. Thus, knowledge is constructed in a form that is influenced by the way in which prior knowledge is structured, by a procedure that is something other than the mere recording or reception of information. Different words that do not necessarily have precisely the same meaning, such as systems, scripts and frames, are used to label "blocks" of knowledge and denote different ways of representing knowledge in computer or human memory.

System, the term that is most commonly used and has some major and distant antecedents (Bartlett, 1932 and 1974), is currently defined as a structure of data that can be used to represent general concepts stored in the memory - an organized "packet" of knowledge that serves to represent separate units of knowledge in an integrated structure, a set of concepts and associations between concepts that define as more complicated concept that is frequently encountered. This means that the system serves as a guide in organizing incoming data. The individual, therefore, uses available systems to give meaning to whatever he or she perceives, working on the basis of an integrative process in which incomplete information requires completion if it is to be absorbed in a logical form.

From this viewpoint, comprehension implies verification of a system and, at the same time, its enrichment, which is a prelude to application of the system in other, similar situations.

By reorganising the data generated by cognitive experiences in the memory, these systems have an impact on skills and encourage their development within the

framework of the constructive process of the acquisition of knowledge.

Thus, we can see that learning is active, as well as constructive. It is the end product of a process that is based on a strategy, on a method used to approach a task and achieve an objective, on a form of monitoring the far-reaching process of codifying, processing and storing information, on an activity and a dynamic that allow the absorption of new knowledge whose acquisition leads to changes in pre-existing knowledge.

If we use an example drawn from the field of memory, where the concept of strategy has become highly developed, we can see that the retrieval of information from the long-term memory is part of the process, whilst the methods that allow and monitor this retrieval (eg use of notes) come under the field of strategies.

The term "strategy" indicates the various systems of decision-making used in the processing of information by people performing tasks involving the identification of concepts. The "organized" nature of the notion of strategy means that it resembles the notion of "programme", which is used to indicate a sequence of actions and decisions, as in a computer programme. Programmes, like strategies, have the purpose of achieving an objective: the difference, which is not of a fundamental nature, is that, apart from being of a dynamic nature, programmes are more general than strategies, which, being more limited, may be seen as "sub-programmes".

What emerges from this attempt to depict learning processes in a diagrammatic form is an emphasis on individuals' mental faculties and the way in which they organize their knowledge and skills, filtering them through their personal conceptual and strategic framework.

On this premise, guidance may be defined as the outcome of a cognitive process

that may be based on information, training, experience and a direct or mediated relationship, within a given society, with the cultural characteristics of that particular society. This relationship is of vital significance. The notion of "culture" is today applied extensively to several variables: social variables (linked, in particular, to age, gender, level of education, employment situation, place of residence); socio-linguistic variables (with reference, for example, to national characteristics reflected in spoken language); ethnic and religious variables; geographical variables (eg in relation to emigrants and immigrants); and variables of other kinds. A single concept thus comprises a combination of heterogeneous elements, some of which are exclusive (eg gender) and some of which may be compatible with other elements (eg linguistic patterns), linked to structural issues (eg unemployment) or dependent on the views that individuals have of life and of the world (eg religion) and may be either relatively stable or prone to change over time. The broadening of the meanings attributed to the term is a significant indicator of the difficulty and, often, the impossibility of culturally pigeon-holing particular individuals or groups according to preconceived or rigidly defined characteristics. The construction of rigid identities is also incompatible with the current acceleration in processes of structural and cultural change, the rise in levels of education, increasing access to information, the development of means of communication and modern mobility. Change does not follow a standard pattern and may vary from place to place, area to area and group to group, with a concomitant sharpening of contrasts (many of which already existed) and emergence of conflicts that demand the redefinition of value systems and behaviour patterns.

The search for common bonds and new forms of social solidarity that, in the face of diversity, might protect the free expression of will and choice emerges as a thorny issue, requiring as it does a balance between the need for "absolutes" and the wide choice of reference frameworks and peer groups available to any one person.

In this context, guidance that is deliberately based on a set structure becomes an activity whose effectiveness and value is limited to a particular period and a particular society. This means that examination of the very notion of guidance must involve linking the definition of the term to the community concerned and its level of economic and social development, to the development and general configuration of individuals' lives, and to the dynamics of interpersonal relations.

The guidance of an individual (like the construction of that individual's skills) is, then, a non-linear process in which elements from various sources, both within and outside the individual, come together to produce knowledge and abilities. That pedagogic research should and must take account of the various phases of this process as possible areas of intervention by both formal education and, in our case, guidance is ineluctable and legitimate.

Guidance, in particular, must be seen (Corda Costa) not only as a phase in the process of accessing information but also as a way in which individuals, through organized or common-sense notions, make their acquaintance with a community. The relationship between the person who knows and what he or she knows can be defined by referring to the notion of "transaction" to reaffirm the functional and interactive value of knowledge that, if it is effective, alters both the person who receives it and the situation or people who provide it. If we are to adopt this approach, however, we need to examine in more depth the situation in which such a dynamic takes place.

1.2. **A process of making decisions and taking action**

Guidance and self-guidance are innate abilities and are, therefore, the end product of knowledge that may have been acquired in various ways, of experience that has been consolidated by the process of taking action and making decisions, of the individual's ability to assess situations, solve problems and make decisions when

faced with unfamiliar situations. The notion of ability, which we therefore need to look at in greater depth, may be defined as being "contextual", since it is linked to the field of action, and "strategic", in that it is related to potential for decision-making and action. This approach is drawn from studies conducted during the 1960s and 1970s on artificial intelligence and expert systems. In these studies, attention was essentially focused on the basic capacities for processing information demonstrated by people, who behave with varying degrees of intelligence in situations in which they lack any specific knowledge or abilities. The pioneering work of Newell and Simon (1972) provides full descriptions of general heuristic processes and also offers crucial, though preliminary, comments on learning and on the thinking of experts working on the basis of a solid, specialized knowledge of the field.

In more recent years, research (see Ajello, Cevoli and Meghnagi, 1982) has analysed ways of processing knowledge and has sharpened the focus by comparing the performance of "novices", that is, people with no particular abilities with respect to a given subject, with that of experts; it has demonstrated a close relationship between structures of knowledge, reasoning processes and problem-solving. It has also examined the subject in more depth, seeking a better understanding (see, in particular, Glaser, 1987 and Chi, Glaser and Farr, 1988) of the structural features of various fields of knowledge; the mechanisms used for decoding the "environment of the problem"; the methods and models by which a problem is recognized (that is, how a person recognizes and redefines it); and the processes involved in decoding difficult, poorly structured situations.

Research on "expertise" or "being expert" clarifies the ways in which experts operate. In particular (Glaser and Chi, 1988):

1. experts tend to excel in their field. There is no evidence to suggest that a person who is highly competent in one field can transfer that competence to

another field. The obvious reason for the excellence of experts is that they have mastery of their knowledge of a particular field;

2. experts perceive the most significant elements in their field of observation. This is evidenced by research on, for example, the game of chess, in which it has been noted that experts excel in memorizing the layout of the pieces; but this ability to observe meaningful models does not reflect a greater general capacity for observation;

3. experts are quick. They are faster than novices in using the skills associated with their field and they quickly solve problems, making few errors. Although previous studies may have shown that experts are slower than novices in the initial phase of problem-solving, experts solve problems faster overall. There are at least two ways of explaining the speed of experts. In the case of simple tasks, such as, for example, typing, speed comes from many hours of practice, which makes the skill more automatic and frees memory capacity that can be used for processing other aspects of the task. This means that experts can be quick either because they are faster in executing a specific task or because they have a greater ability to perform the overall task. Another possible explanation for experts' speed in solving problems is that they reach the solution without having to conduct an extensive search for it. Hence the hypothesis that experts store direct rules governing condition and action in which a particular model (condition) leads to a standard sequence of actions;

4. experts have a better short and long-term memory. Experts' power of recall seems to go beyond the limits of short-term memory. This is not because their short-term memory is better than other people's but because the automatic nature of many of their skills frees resources for greater memory storage;

5. experts see and perceive a problem in their field at a deeper and more principled level than novices do. Novices tend to perceive problems at a more superficial level. A simple, fail-safe method of demonstrating this is to ask experts and novices to classify problems and analyse the way in which they are grouped together. Both experts and novices have their own conceptual categories, but the experts' categories have a semantic basis, whereas the novices' ones are determined in a superficial, academic way;

6. experts invest a large amount of time in qualitative analysis of problems. In the initial phase of problem-solving, experts usually try to "understand" the problem whilst novices immediately hurl themselves into attempts to apply equations and solutions. To analyse a problem qualitatively, experts construct a mental image from which they can infer relations that help them to define the situation, thus identifying the limitations posed by the problem. The usefulness of qualitative analysis in identifying the bounds of a problem can clearly be seen in the case of poorly structured problems or decision-making processes;

7. experts have a strong capacity for self-monitoring. Experts seem to be more aware than novices are of when they have made a mistake, when they have misunderstood something or when they need to check and verify their solutions. Experts' self-awareness is also manifested in the fact that they are more accurate than are novices in judging the difficulty of a problem. Experts are more questioning. Novices, on the other hand, ask more questions about simpler aspects.

It is possible to argue that experts' greater capacity for monitoring and self-awareness reflect their greater practical awareness that tasks are often different manifestations of the same problem. Experts base their knowledge on principles associated with the task and organize problems into categories. Experts' ability to

assess the difficulty of a problem enables them to decide how to allocate their time to solve the actual problem. This means that experts' capacity for monitoring reflects their broader, underlying, context-linked knowledge that allows them to foresee difficulties on the basis of principles rather than on the basis of irrelevances.

In conclusion, these research findings lead us to think of high skill levels in terms of the play of structures of knowledge and the ability to process that knowledge. The critical differences evidenced between individuals can be explained by greater or lesser ability in a particular context of knowledge, a varying capacity to monitor and order knowledge and skills, and differing ways of perceiving reality in general and specific situations.

Experts convert the problem into another, perhaps previously structured problem; they spend time on this conversion; this conversion gives rise to a new perception; and this new perception embraces secondary problems and partial solutions. Novices spend little time redefining the original problem and immediately start seeking partial solutions to specific problems; their perception of the problem is constructed very quickly and lacks any historical dimension.

In practical situations, as in the social sciences, problems tend to be "poorly structured", which means that objectives are vague and there is a lack of basic consensus among experts as to their solution. Redefinition of the problem gives rise to different "perceptions", depending on the person concerned, which means that, unlike in other scientific disciplines, the solution process cannot be algorithmically deduced on the basis of common, compulsory steps forward. The process is rather one of "argumentation", of an explication of the reasons individuals give themselves and others to justify the appropriateness of the solution they have chosen and applied in a given situation. To be an expert means to be able to express one's competence at different levels and in different ways, from knowing

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what to do in concrete terms to being able to tackle a problem, however poorly defined, by perceiving it in a different way and so being able to formulate interpretative hypotheses and possible solutions, explain the nature of the problem and justify the reasons for choices, actions and decisions.

In this sense, guidance can be seen as a skill, as contextualized knowledge in which context determines effectiveness, guides manifestation, directs functioning and defines efficacy.

It is also obvious that the skill levels of people who use guidance services will determine whether or not they make appropriate, effective use of that resource, whether it involves merely the provision of information or a proposal for action.

It should, however, also be pointed out that each person constructs their skills and knowledge in the framework of a process that is not limited merely to contact with material or symbolic reality but also involves social mediation by more skilled people or peers, who offer material for reflection, analysis and thought. This is where guidance has the potential to become an action that supports transition processes.

If guidance is to play this role, it is vital that account be taken both of the inherent elements of potential development linked to the ways in which previous experiences have been structured by their gradual processing in accordance with symbol systems, and of associated forms of socialization.

Social interaction, which sustains individuals on the emotional level, enables people not only to share difficulties and problems with others, but also to analyse current issues with more clarity, to communicate, make observations, explain points of view and, thus, make use of other people's contributions to construct (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) the necessary "framework" for the acquisition of further

skills and knowledge and for the systemization of experiential data.

All of this means that guidance can be seen as "situated knowledge", as a form of expertise in which descriptive knowledge is highly proceduralized and automatic and in which there is a collection of heuristics for the solution of very specific problems.

This general definition makes it possible to look at the merit of the variety of skill levels, to consider their specific implications and understand how they are acquired, how they operate and the way in which the effectiveness of guidance activities will vary depending on the levels of knowledge possessed by the people concerned. Experts and non-experts organize their knowledge in different ways: in the case of experts, the organizational structure includes descriptive knowledge, which is based on concepts and contents, and procedural knowledge, which is linked to specific "rules" of action. Novices tend to have a predominance of procedural knowledge, which impedes the use of more general rules to solve problems. This means that experts are able to monitor their own problem-solving process, to look back and stop to think, and even change what they have done before if it is no longer appropriate in view of what they have done afterwards. If we take this to the extreme, we can argue that differences concern not so much the presence or absence of the necessary concepts to solve a problem as the ability to organize and process them in different ways.

Everybody is, in fact, constantly re-processing the information they receive from their environment, reorganizing it on the basis of broader hypotheses and working in accordance with strategies that may not always be identifiable or foreseeable in an ordered process of transmission and acquisition. Connected with this, among other things, is the debate in the field of adult education on the significance (see Meghnagi, 1986) of existential situations, of living and working environments, in the development of demand for skills and cognitive processes that lead to changes

in knowledge. Innovative experiments (Schwartz, 1989), in confirming this theory, have demonstrated the fact that it is possible to provide poorly educated people with effective guidance and training. This was achieved on the basis of the premise that, whatever people's level of schooling and whatever their basic abilities, they always have a collection of skills that they have mastered and which can be used as a basis for intervention.

1.3. **A dynamic between perception, "culture" and objective facts**

Within their field of action, skills are expressed through processes whose tangible element is action and decision-making. Consideration of these two aspects, which are present in the outcome of any effective guidance activity, suggests some interesting connections.

Decision-making processes always include (Simon, 1988) an emotional component that may cause anxiety and errors but which is also the basis for intuitions that appear to be illogical, in that they cannot be expressed in words or formalized as symbols, but are often effective and productive.

Intuition is not a mystical talent (Simon, 1987) but a product of training and experience which is accumulated in the form of knowledge and skills that converge in the formulation of an innovative hypothesis.

Creative action is often the result of calculated risks, the precision of whose calculation derives from a whole ensemble of higher cognitive "baggage".

If we move on from problem-solving to decision-making (which is obviously connected to problem-solving), we find that these conclusions are confirmed, since every decision (March, 1981) is based on an analysis of the context as well as of the problem, on interpretative as well as analytical examination, on judgements that

are neither predetermined nor universal.

This is why we need to pay attention to the way in which people see situations through personal and social perceptions of their reality.

Everyone observes, remembers, acts and reacts to their environment by filtering and selecting the information that reaches them through their sensory organs, thus constructing concepts and images. This process, which is obviously a personal one, does not, however, take place in a world devoid of definitions and perceptions, which are, to a significant degree, common to most members of a community and guide the way in which information is processed and ideas are formed. From this viewpoint, the process of gaining knowledge is a constant gathering of objective data that are absorbed in various ways during a complicated process of acquisition, of which guidance, when intentionally sought out, may be an integral part.

When new perceptions, images and information are placed in an organized context of ideas and judgements of reality, perceptions of that reality may be transformed from being unconscious to being partially conscious and may, in any event, be consciously included in an overall framework of knowledge and purpose. Memory and the past play a significant role in this.

The construction of perceptions of reality tends to make familiar that which is not familiar, so that it can be controlled and integrated in a mental universe that is thus enriched and transformed.

In defining formal, logical systems to verify hypotheses and formulate interpretations, science tends to make a rational reconstruction of facts and information and, although it, too, is conditioned by the ideas and values of the surrounding culture, it does not exclude the possibility that earlier learning may become invalid. On the contrary, science tends (or should tend) towards a constant

refinement of conceptual systems, assumptions and, finally, perceptions of reality that have an impact on every branch of knowledge. The confirmation or modification of current ideas and common beliefs is the very raison d'être of science, which differs from common sense but is nonetheless involved with it in a constant interchange in which common sense confirms or challenges science and vice versa. Science and common sense are complementary as a result of two other mechanisms (Moscovici, 1984 and 1989): firstly, the "anchoring" of anything that is alien and disturbing to a particular system of categories that can accommodate it, by giving it a name and somehow classifying it. This implies the ability to analyse, assess, communicate, imagine and, finally, represent the alien or disturbing factor. The second mechanism is "objectification", whereby the iconic quality of an idea, event or person is identified. This makes it possible to reproduce a concept in an image.

By giving alien and disturbing elements a name and an image, by labelling them in accordance with known and experienced reality, the processes of anchoring and objectification make it possible to place these elements within the identification framework of a culture.

As Bruner (1989) has observed, the major activity of all human beings is that of giving meaning to their interactions with their environment. What is crucial about these processes of creating meaning is that they have an impact on what we do, what we believe, what we feel. This is true for everyone and for every activity involving the assignation of meaning. We act on the basis of what has meaning for us, of what we feel has significance. In the field of the human sciences, it is possible to argue that some procedures for the assignation of meaning are better or more reliable than others, and, by some standards, this is true. But there are no universal standards to guarantee the assignation of valid meanings in all contexts.

Finally, perceptions of reality and social cognition are characterized by a dialectic

between stability and innovation, which is linked to both history and memory, and are, in fact, the elements that underpin our very culture, our way of being and our way of accessing knowledge.

This means that, from the point of view of the recipient, guidance is seen in terms of perceptions of reality that give rise to judgements, choices, options and decisions that always have both individual and social implications.

This is of vital significance in the development of an approach that opts for a conception of guidance that is both "contextual", in that it is linked to the field of action, and "strategic", in that it takes account of all the possibilities for making decisions and taking action.

In describing skills, studies on expertise make a distinction that is rare but, to our mind, very significant, between routine expertise, which is characterized by speed, accuracy and its automatic nature but is not particularly adaptable to new situations, and adaptive expertise, which is more flexible and, above all, based on a better understanding of the context and situation in which action is being taken. This distinction is important in that it introduces a cultural dimension into the discourse and promotes consideration not only of effectiveness but also of the ability to understand and interpret the meaning of the processes used. This does not mean that the dimensions of effectiveness and specialization are ignored (Boscolo, 1991), but rather that they are seen in relation to the meaning attributed to the situation in the definition of objectives, in the perception of reality and in the hypotheses adopted to change it.

This approach has been taken in various research works, which we shall look at in more detail here, since they have important implications for the recipients of any guidance activity, including young people. These intercultural research works (see Schweder and Herdt, 1990) all focus on three fundamental issues: the need to pay

specific attention to the variability of behaviour in relation to different contexts; the need, when examining the processes of transmitting, processing and acquiring knowledge, to take account of cultural variables; and the need, when studying the psychological characteristics of learning and behaviour, to acknowledge the inevitable impact on these variables.

The "universalists", who claim that there are no significant cultural variations in cognitive processes and that the only variations are superficial ones that can be attributed to specific contents, seem to be proved wrong, not only if we consider differences between cultures but even if we consider the different characteristics presented by individuals within the same culture. Every community or group develops forms of cultural adaptation that change over time but which also retain their essential features over long periods; and these features are different from those of other groups because they are linked to particular historical and social conditions. We can also assume that, as regards certain issues, problems and situations, there will be a system of relatively standard reference values and cultural models that give rise to similar characteristics within the group as regards cognitive styles and orientation. This, too, supports the theory that the relationship between culture and cognition is the result (Resnick, 1991; Cole, 1991; and Rogoff, 1990) of interactions between people and their everyday environment, which will differ depending on prevailing attitudes and value systems. Differences in the abilities of individuals and groups can, therefore, be attributed to the natural or experimental conditions in which they are faced with particular tasks.

This approach, which is known as cognitive anthropology and whose major proponents are the psychologists and anthropologists at the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition set up within the University of San Diego in California, is taken in all of Bruner's works (from those dating back to 1966 and 1967 right up to his most recent work of 1989) and clearly echoes Soviet research of the 1930s under Vygotskji (especially his works of 1934 and 1990).

Vygotskji (1934, 1990, 1933-35, 1980, 1960 and 1974), whose theoretical approach has been the subject of growing interest, firstly in the field of adult education in the 1970s and then in the psychological debate of the 1980s, maintains that the origin of the higher psychic functions lies in the social relationships that individuals establish with the outside world, since these relationships are built using the "tools" with which each society structures and transmits knowledge. This transmission of knowledge concerns both the content and the tools with which that content is organized by people who are a part of the particular group or society concerned. In Vygotskji's theory and empirical research, as we have already observed, language is the fundamental tool for the initial development of infants and for their later cultural development. Like all tools, language is historical, in that it develops during the course of the individual's life and is gradually enriched by the addition of concepts that comprise a society's total knowledge, which may be transmitted using other tools, such as, for example, writing. In this sense, Vygotskji claims that his theory of psychology is cultural and instrumental, as well as historical. This approach, which has been used in comparative studies of the thought processes of illiterate and educated individuals, is the foundation of some important pieces of research (see, in particular, Lurija, 1976, 1979 and 1982) that confirm the theory.

This means we can affirm that people develop by internalizing the modes of action, perception and symbolization that exist within their culture. This utilization of cultural and instrumental resources "amplifies" the cognitive abilities of the individual, who functions by representing and organizing experiences in three ways: by active representation, whereby the individual constructs an appropriate working framework for the coordination of the movements required to perform a motor task; by iconic representation, whereby the individual constructs a visual image or spatial framework; and by symbolic representation, whereby the individual reproduces experience using a symbol system, such as language. This theory precludes any cognitive organization whose structure comprises a hierarchy of phases in which one phase will take precedence over another, depending on the

period of development concerned. Rather, it presumes that abilities associated with different cognitive requirements coexist within the individual, although it also assumes symbolic representation of the logically pre-eminent function.

Cognitive tools and associated operational tools incorporate (see, for a synthesis, Cole, 1991 and Resnick, 1990 and 1991) the characteristic elements of the historical development of a culture; people develop their own theories, that may be articulated in various ways, and use them either consciously or unconsciously whenever they are functioning in a social environment and need to relate, analyse, synthesize or formulate judgements. People think and reason according to the criteria and norms that are accepted within a specific culture; they follow recognized conventions; they develop within the framework of common patterns of relating and socializing. Language is the vehicle and instrument for processing reality, a culturally conditioned resource, and the carrier of social perceptions and images of reality.

This means that the development of knowledge varies from one person to another but is always based on a marked sensitivity to cultural context - so much so that it is necessary to analyse the ways in which people share not only knowledge but even a particular way of thinking. The constructionists might claim that every learning is the result of personal processing, but it can also be argued that personal experience, associated with events, is only a part of what forms the basis for that processing. People construct their knowledge on the basis of what they are told by others, whether orally, in writing, in images or gestures. The individual's construction process is constantly influenced by other people, who provide information, stimuli and prompts; by increasing attention to the nature of the reasoning process; by contradiction; by negotiation. The cognitive approach is, therefore, cognate with the relationships established between socio-linguistic and cultural/anthropological areas of research.

Thus, the idea has become established that knowledge is distributed among individuals by interactions that determine the processes by which they make judgements and decisions and solve problems, with a concomitant break away from the previous boundaries between disciplines and subsidiary disciplines and the creation of an interaction and dialectic between adjacent fields.

Guidance, like skills themselves, must therefore be considered in relation to the situations in which it is given expression. The situation is not irrelevant to the exercise of an ability; on the contrary, it actually gives meaning to the manifestation of that ability, usually in relation to tackling situations both at work and outside it.

The gradual increase in fields of experience provides the basis for the perception of knowledge and skills and for the construction of frameworks within which to place knowledge and organize events, thus determining cognitive development, a fundamental part of which resides not in the creation of central structures but in the structuring of knowledge and skills relating to specific situations.

Social relations in various contexts shape and determine the unique nature of the human cognitive function. The nature of the human mind is largely conditioned by the forms of interaction typical of each culture. The organization of ideas is, then, connected with the various activities that the individual learns to perform from childhood onwards, with the difficulties encountered in performing tasks, and with the frequency with which those difficulties are encountered. The way people think is the result of the internalization of culturally determined knowledge and cognition. Human beings are social in a different way from other species, since only human beings can use their culture to make contact with their cultural heritage, to project themselves into the future and "place" that future in the present in the form of ideas, beliefs and perceptions that define and organize both the socio-cultural environment and individual behaviour as regards attitudes, ways of

being, choices and decisions.

Any cognitive act must, then, be seen as a specific response to a specific set of circumstances. Learning must be seem as a form of activity that is socially situated within the framework of a particular empirical situation.

From this viewpoint, it seems vital, for the purposes of this report, to analyse research on young people in the light of the overall context accommodating both the research itself and the subjects whose way of being and behaviour is being studied.

2. Research on the situation and life circumstances of young people

Research on the situation of young people in Italy is abundant and covers a wide range of fields, making it difficult to summarize.

However, although research was so varied in the 1980s (with the list including Mion, 1986; Reuty, 1989; Cavalli and De Lillo, 1988) that it covered a multiplicity of areas, the 1990s saw it focusing on specific aspects, echoing (Cavalli and De Lillo, 1993) the strengthening of the logical connection between the situation of young people and social change, in its broadest sense.

This gave rise to a tendency for researchers to focus on three main areas of analysis: the deregulation of life patterns, normative models and "appropriate" behaviour for different age groups; work, in terms of its increasingly "atypical" nature, the growing instability and flexibility of jobs that used to be seen as stable, and the implications of these changes; and exclusion, as a process, as a negative condition of day-to-day life and as an impediment to people's full exercise of their rights.

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In the following sections of this report, we give an overview of research covering these three areas to which we have referred - research which, despite its specificity, is appropriate to our study of the situation of young people.

2.1. **Times, normative models, security, unpredictability**

In all European countries, the dynamics of demographic trends indicate that the past few decades have seen a substantial increase in life expectancy.

This structural change has been accompanied by other changes of a similar or different kind, with obvious repercussions on people's ways of life and living, the social system, the labour market and the culture of civil society.

Research on the subject (see Saraceno, 1991a) has long dwelled upon the implications of changes in the length, structure and level of standardization of people's lives over the past century.

This research has, in particular, identified two processes covering different periods of time: an initial process whereby the structure and chronology of the lives of individuals and social groups became increasingly standardized as a result of demographic and normative institutionalization and regularization; and a later process, which is still occurring, whereby the standardized models previously established are being "de-regulated".

The first of these two processes, the "institutionalization of life paths", started slowly and was well entrenched by the 1950s and 1960s. It was the result of various interconnected phenomena, including increased control of life paths by the labour market, enterprises and the State through the introduction of regulations on the structure, periods and specific ages for life choices and events. We can cite, for example, the definition of specific ages at which people entered and left the labour

market, of minimum ages at which people could enter and leave the education system, of legally binding minimum ages at which people could enter into marriage and reciprocal obligations between spouses and generations. Culturally shared rules on the appropriateness of certain sequences (first you study and then you work; if you are male, you get a job first and then marry; first you get married and then you have children, etc) and the behaviour appropriate to a particular age of life reinforced and, in many cases, determined the rules that were gradually established. The obligations derived from all the control mechanisms introduced were accompanied by forms of social security that guaranteed greater security as regards the social risks of illness, unemployment and incapacity for work.

All these phenomena and other connected ones, in particular those relating to infant and adult mortality, which were a consequence of changes in the availability of access to food and sanitation, were at the basis of the development of the "normal" contemporary life cycle, in which we can identify "suitable ages" and "normal life patterns" (concerning work, family life, education, etc).

Access to a "normal life", required for social acceptability and an aim to be achieved by most men, was, of course, conditioned by the economic circumstances of individuals and groups, with differences remaining between people belonging to different social strata: people of the lower classes tended to have shorter school and working lives and to "age" earlier.

Exclusion from access to the principal resources of such "normality" for people who lay, either partly or totally, outside the labour market, under-employed and unemployed young people and adults, workers in the black economy, some of the rural classes and virtually all immigrants emerged as a problem as regards the consolidation of an ideal model to aim towards. "Expedients", in the form of social-welfare activities and allowances, were thus introduced and consolidated to supplement a more respectable and certain way of living and working.

The widespread diffusion of this model, in terms of both fact and value systems, in the 1960s may also be seen (Salvati, 1990) as the result of workers' struggle for a more secure and predictable pattern to their lives. It was this, and not merely working times, that was the cause and result of industrial conflict concerning regulation, monitoring and the length of the working day - the immediate objectives of so many demands.

This process has been analysed (Mirabile, 1991), with account being taken of, among other things, the particular form of division of labour between the sexes, which was partly already established and partly strengthened by these processes. The increase, for a growing number of men, in paid employment relationships characterized by security, predictability and social protection was accompanied by the gradual exclusion of women from the labour market, their ghettoization in more "informal", less secure sectors and their access to forms of protection as "dependent relatives" (to use the terminology of social-security and fiscal policy-makers), through marriage.

The system based on the nuclear family and the division of labour between the sexes was (Balbo, 1987) complementary both to the organization of work and the temporal availability and geographical mobility this required of workers, and to the very structure of the welfare state. In this system, women played the major role in providing care and guaranteeing reproduction, including the reproduction required for the development of the welfare state.

This is the source of the general model that has been referred to (Saraceno, 1990) as the "family/labour system of social security", which was the basis for the ways of standardizing and guaranteeing life cycles that were developed during the first half of this century.

The second process, the de-institutionalization of life cycles, which consisted of the

introduction of differentiations in life cycles and a concomitant relaxation of the regulations that had previously guaranteed standardization and stability, was a reversal of the former trend.

There were various structural and cultural reasons underlying this change, of which we shall mention only some of the most important.

On the labour market, there has been a change in both demand and supply. With growing unemployment, people who achieve occupational integration are generally faced with less security as regards actual length of employment, less predictability in terms of career paths and opportunities and greater demands as regards flexibility of working times. The fact that people have less say in their working conditions is accompanied by a gradual decline in the conditions, resources and forms of protection previously provided by the welfare state.

The demand for more flexibility and less institutionalization in their life paths that comes from individuals themselves is partly the result and partly the cause of these processes, which are taking place on a cultural as well as a structural level.

Alongside the previous model based on security, stability and standardization are emerging other models linked to desires and interests that, in contrast, give pride of place to opportunities for change, for picking up old threads, in training, work and relationships, and choosing how many children to have and how to bring them up. From this point of view, the breaking of traditional patterns as regards study and work is emblematic: people are changing the sequences and models of "normality" governing particular phases of life or ages and adapting them to what they feel is appropriate or "right" for them. Compared with these new models, the various forms of social security now seem rigid or inappropriate.

Among other things, demographic changes and, in particular, the lengthening of life

expectancy connected with improvements in health have changed the social image and subjective experiences of particular age groups, which are now in partial or total contradiction to the socially accepted norms concerning "appropriate" behaviour for each age group. A specific aspect concerning women is the opportunity, made possible by birth control, of, once their children are grown up, making new choices or setting off again upon abandoned paths (eg of study or work). In this context, women are faced with new causes of insecurity deriving from the changes in matrimonial models and growing marital instability.

Flexibility and unpredictability in life paths differ for men and women but they also differ from individual to individual. Flexibility of working life is demanded by groups of both sexes who have the resources and courage to define their own plans for the future, but it is, of course, opposed by people who may fear a return to previous conditions of uncertainty or the impossibility of achieving long desired objectives.

The situation seems to be aggravated by a contradiction that remains unresolved in the division of tasks in relationships between the sexes. For example (Saraceno, 1986 and 1987), whilst the employment of women, and particularly married women with children, continues to rise, the division of caring and reproductive work between the sexes still gives men a role in family and parental care that is absolutely relative and in no way comparable, in terms of time and energy, to that played by women.

It is, however, undeniably true that, among the younger generations, women now see participation in working life as an accepted fact and no longer as a transgression of the prevailing model of female social identity. The consequent creation of new models of "normality" has an impact on all the life paths born of women's emerging expectation of reciprocity with men as regards the sharing of tasks and of the new resources that enable people to plan their own lives. The

resulting reduction in the number of unpaid, full-time carers to meet the needs of a growing number of very old people is one of the major problems pertaining to the actions, choices and attitudes of young people of both sexes.

By contrast, young people seem to be less concerned by the growing instability of intimate relationships, which is another of the phenomena that have shaken the traditional life patterns of both men and women and which generally (Barbagli, 1990; Ermisch, Jenkins and Wright, 1990) creates more difficulties for women, who seem to have less chance than men of remarrying. The problem seems to affect people who are older or who have small children or little training and occupational experience, that is, people whose circumstances make it difficult for them to get reasonably paid, relatively secure jobs.

This state of affairs has, among other things (Lister, 1990), some little observed effects on children who are exposed to altered conditions in the family, which is their affective environment. This is a subject that has yet to be properly addressed but it will doubtless be thoroughly researched in the future if it is true that phenomena such as the weakening of people's place on the labour market and the weakening of marital bonds have a marked emotional effect on adults and on their relationships with their children and with young people in general.

It is, however, young people who are increasingly in a situation that is likely to produce scenarios that differ more and more from the past, including international conflicts, whose nature may well have psychological roots, as has been fully studied in the past, but also has new and complicated cultural and structural roots.

For all these reasons, the word "flexibility", in its connection with the individual nature of opportunities and life choices, which is widely used to indicate an attitude to be adopted to tackle the changes currently taking place in our society, reveals itself as an ambiguous expression and formula. Although flexibility in people's

lives may be perceived and formulated as something desired by people who have the appropriate vocational, cultural and family resources, in many other cases it is nothing more than a necessity and not a considered choice. The consequence of these phenomena may be not only a reinforcement of old inequalities but also the creation of new inequalities, between the sexes, between classes and between groups of different ethnic origin, from different geographical areas or of different ages.

The consequent undermining of hard-fought citizens' rights, of recently and partially secured guarantees, of equality between the sexes or economic security of life produces (Cardano, 1990) not only non-linear life patterns but also inevitable conflicts between the different generations, struggling for space and for access to social, economic and occupational opportunities.

The result of this state of affairs is that each individual's predominant social identity seems to be mutable, changing with prevailing external and internal conditions and events.

Even the indicator of belonging to a certain age group, which is beyond question from a purely biological point of view, provides only a very partial description of conditions, attitudes, behaviours and ways of seeing and perceiving reality. The variables of gender, schooling, qualifications and residence are intertwined with the nature of a person's family commitments, the nature of the current phase they are going through in their working life, whether or not they are participating in the labour market and whether their job is full-time or part-time, secure or insecure. So, at the age of 25, a person may be a young manager, an office worker, a blue-collar worker, an undergraduate, a working student, a student worker or a drop-out; and the same person may also be a woman or a man, have a partner or be single, have children or be childless.

This has led to a gradual increase in research (see Pizzorno, 1989) on social differences, complexity and identity to overcome the crisis concerning interpretative paradigms for contemporary change and to identify more clearly defined categories of analysis.

In the field of labour studies, for example, researchers have abandoned the simplistic distinction between employment and unemployment and have recognized the need to take account of the relationship between the sequential organization of working times in the long term, the day-to-day organization of working times, the varying relational and symbolic worlds of the individual and the forms of identification made possible by work experience and by the characteristics of work. Similarly, changes in the overall configuration of people's personal lives and relationships have been linked to the cultural changes affecting our society, both for structural reasons and to allow critical consideration and analysis of various groups, including young people.

In brief, investigations show that structural and cultural factors work in different ways to change the dynamics of relationships between the generations, the features of relationships between the sexes and the structure and nature of marriage, in terms of its length and reproductive function, with a consequent variety in life patterns: longer life spans enable people to extend the number of choices they can make or to "repeat" some of them; the chronological order in which choices are made varies from individual to individual, with fewer and fewer common features, in terms of both space and time, since people can remain in a situation previously considered appropriate to a younger age (eg living with their parents) or, vice versa, can make choices that used to be made when people were older (eg sexual activity).

The structuring of people's lives, dictated by society, its rhythm decided in accordance with age and based on the prevailing and fragmented tasks allocated by

society to each age group (training for young people, production and reproduction for adults and rest for the elderly), is now undergoing radical changes in the distribution of activities by age, leading to a shift to older age brackets of functions previously undertaken at earlier times of life.

All of these factors are associated with assessments of the past, images of the present and perceptions of the future in which working conditions and socio-relational dynamics do not seem to be disconnected.

The reallocation of roles and life tasks is obviously determined to a considerable extent by the type of changes currently taking place in the social environment. The "naturalness" of much human behaviour is conditioned by beliefs, customs and explicit or implicit rules, in which many aspects of material life and social norms play a decisive role, particularly as regards the structuring of systems of etiquette that determine personal choices and behaviours. As we have shown, in advanced contemporary societies, this interdependence, that can be defined as being anthropological, is identified by examining the factors of the "institutionalization" and, conversely, the "de-institutionalization" of life paths. Compulsory schooling, for example, which virtually all Western nations established earlier this century, with a leaving age of between 14 and 18, helps us to identify very precisely the age of adolescence or of young adulthood, which, on the basis of the cultural hegemony of this life model, may be extended to people who belong to the same age group but are actually living adult lives (we are thinking here of the many young people who become prematurely involved in activities, ranging from work to illegal or criminal activities, other than schooling); this "institutionalizing" effect may now also be had by numerous other factors, both positive and negative, among which we may cite the increase in qualifications and, consequently, in the length of schooling for many population groups, or the lengthening of the amount of time people wait before entering the labour market or achieving full independence, outside the family, which may also be achieved by finding separate

accommodation, marrying or living with someone. These factors, together with many others that need not be cited here, mark a trend towards postponing social functions and roles previously associated with earlier times of life. The most obvious example at the moment is the tendency of various governments (including in Italy) to defer the pensionable age, school-leaving age and the minimum age of eligibility for the benefits associated with entry into working life.

The latter two cases concern public decisions that, in compliance with the processes described earlier, are intended as a means of dealing with the current reduction in the stable employment base (defined as full-time, permanent employment throughout a person's working life) by prolonging the initial phases of people's lives. Quite apart from the formal decisions taken by various governments, who have legislated to prolong the periods associated with entry into working life, large and growing numbers of men and women under the age of 30, and particularly those who do not have sufficient cultural and vocational means at their disposal, have in the past few years begun to form a new marginalized group. Although it may indeed be true, as an interesting body of literature maintains (see also Sgritta, 1990), that age groups can be defined on the basis of various social and personal "calendars" and parameters, including not least the influence of a person's perception of his or her social role, what we are experiencing here is the creation of a social group whose main feature is its early, and in some cases permanent, exclusion from work and from the relationships determined by it.

The lengthening of the pre-work phases of life implies a growing and often unsustainable social cost for increasingly large groups of the population, including, above all, young people with little schooling and few skills, who have to struggle against limitations of various kinds.

The radical transformation of the working times that are socially necessary for various economic activities is secondary to the crisis in public systems of

regulation. The practical development of a culture and ethics of responsibility that can support, guide and render productive individuals' availability to participate in projects and activities of collective utility is certainly a necessary but insufficient precondition for providing an adequate response, particularly as regards the most disadvantaged groups of young people. Certainly, the relative and absolute proportion of activities that may be defined as reproductive in relation to other activities is gradually increasing. Whereas, in production activities, human labour is being affected by a considerable reduction in the size of workforces at all levels, service activities require a much greater, direct deployment of human resources. This is determined both by the fact that it is impossible to cut the time needed to perform activities based on the direct provision, by one person to another, of information, assistance and care, and by the increase in social needs concerning, among other things, the quantity and quality of knowledge and know-how in complex societies, the new structure of demographic trends and the changes in the role and functions of the family.

The education system can make a useful contribution to these processes but seems virtually impotent as regards the cultural reintegration of young people for whose premature exclusion it is itself responsible.

If this state of affairs changes, guidance itself will be prejudiced. Having said that, and presuming a change in methods of training, it is reasonable to argue that, to be effective, guidance must take account of the social environment and personal characteristics of the individuals concerned.

2.2. **Increasingly "atypical" and discontinuous job prospects**

Research on the dynamics of the labour market during the 1980s and 1990s attempted to elucidate the nature of methods of labour provision and the extent of labour that did not comply with the "standard" model (of legally regulated, full-

time work). Investigations also tried, in the absence of any detailed statistical data, to clarify and document the characteristics of self-employed work and the extent of part-time and fixed-term employment. It is difficult to give an account of the situation thus analysed, partly because, in many cases, the casual provision of labour was subject to little regulatory or contractual structure and partly because of the understandable reticence of the people involved to provide information on their personal experiences. Also, the scattered nature of initiatives taken by enterprises to redefine working times makes it impossible to conduct a general survey of the new organization of working times.

There are, however, various strong indications that "atypical" forms of work constitute a rapidly growing area and current trends seem likely to become stronger over the next few years and to extend to increasingly large proportions of the labour force.

The concept of deregulation and its acceptance at normative level and as regards bargaining between the social partners seems, during the 1980s, to have found justification in the very serious employment crisis hitting all European countries and countries outside Europe as well. It has, therefore, been assumed that unemployment can be dealt with at local level, by stimulating the adjustment of the labour market to enterprises' needs, introducing policies of pay restraint and cost containment, and modifying the agreements that govern the system of labour relations, making them more flexible.

This approach seems to have been adopted by most European countries, where the development of "explicit" atypical forms of work has been considerably greater than it has so far been in Italy. There seem to be as many forms of flexibility as there are components in the employment relationship, and the analyses conducted take account of the parameters specific to the countries and sectors considered. From this point of view, although the forms of flexibility adopted in other

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European countries may, on a general level, be spreading into Italy, the concrete forms they have taken or may take will be moulded to suit the specific case of Italy.

Except in a few rigidly prescribed cases, fixed-term contracts were illegal in the private sector in Italy until 1983, and legislation on part-time work is, by contrast with the situation in other European countries, very recent, dating back to only 1984. The development of atypical forms of work has, then, been held back by the legislative context and by an industrial-relations system that has checked their use, even though, in Italy, this type of development goes hand-in-hand with a tradition and massive presence of undeclared work and moonlighting.

In short, in Italy, mechanisms for adjusting the labour factor to enterprises' needs have taken different routes from those followed in other countries, with ambivalent results from various points of view. We are referring, in particular, to instruments such as voluntary redundancy, early retirement, the Cassa Integrazione Guadagni (special public fund to protect workers' income) and restrictions on labour turnover.

This means that Italian enterprises have been able to count on a set of instruments that have reduced the social costs involved in workers' departure from occupational activity. But it is these very instruments that have led to further segmentation of labour markets and discrimination between protected individuals (workers in major industrial enterprises) and those who are not covered by guarantee systems. They have also led to a heavy increase in expenditure on social security and welfare, which has to be covered by people in employment.

This situation has been influenced by a prevailing model of the Italian welfare state and of unemployment-protection systems that was compatible with the role of the trade unions, whose major concern was to protect their members, particularly those

who were already in the world of work, and to exclude groups of workers and young people, who, given the changes in production structures (eg the trend whereby demand for industrial labour was beginning to focus on more highly educated segments of the labour supply) and demographic and social factors (growth in the number of young people and women in the available labour force), have ended up by becoming the real crux of the unemployment problem in Italy.

Legislation and trade-union agreements since the 1980s have, however, been working towards a breakdown of the differentiation between forms of employment relationship and towards more flexible use of the labour force.

Apart from the political and institutional factors that have played a decisive role in the definition of the rules and processes concerning increased labour flexibility, there are also some structural factors that are pushing towards a further extension of the flexible use of the labour force. Particularly in the industrial field, technological development and the increase in market variability have created a framework of uncertainties to which enterprises must respond with new organizational and occupational abilities. Although, in Italy, the great "Fordist" enterprises are flanked by other smaller kinds of enterprise that have always had more flexible organizational structures, there is little doubt that major enterprises' strengths and capacities for survival or relaunch are linked to the change in the organizational structure towards greater flexibility. And similarly, in the varied field of services, flexibility of the workforce seems to be a permanent structural feature, though with different characteristics depending on the activity concerned.

The forms of employment that will be adopted to achieve flexibility cannot be identified with any certainty, since political and institutional factors have a determining role.

Also, although it is possible to predict the gradual spread throughout the economic

system of more flexible methods of employing the labour force, the levels of penetration of a new model of employment relationships will vary markedly from one sector to another, as well as from one enterprise to another.

Form this viewpoint, given the current trends identified by several pieces of research on the phenomenon:

- we may note changes in the organization of working times in industrial sectors using standard employed labour, with an increase in shift work, an increase in the demand for night work and holiday work, an increase in part-time working and the introduction of job-sharing; under the impetus of requirements concerning increased flexibility in the functioning of plants and of policies to encourage the hiring of labour (eg the massive recruitment promoted by the introduction of work/training contracts), great advantage has been taken of the possibilities for using fixed-term contracts;

- in the service industry, and particularly in the distribution sector, there has been an upsurge in the use of double shifts, whilst the penetration of computerized data-processing has led to the rapid spread of shift work at data-processing centres. Even in cleaning services, there has been a widespread increase in the use of unsociable working hours, either very early in the morning or very late at night; and the same trend is emerging in the catering sector, where there has also been a shift in working times to Saturdays and Sundays.

Furthermore, the times at which people begin and finish work are now less rigidly defined in the private sector, particularly as regards office workers in major urban centres.

Finally, employment under fixed-term contracts has increased dramatically, not

only in all the sectors in which this might be expected because of the seasonal nature of their production activities, such as commerce, tourism, agriculture and the food industry, but throughout the entire economic system.

Several hypotheses can be formulated with respect to these trends.

We can, for example, predict that the next few years will, by a process of "emulation", see these trends spread to other enterprises in these sectors, and that the phenomenon will also emerge in other sectors.

We must, however, be very cautious in assessing the scope of this process. In the service sector, for example, the increase in and diversification of services offered to users will necessarily lead to a greater requirement for intermittent labour, which will result in an increase in atypical, flexible working times that are, by their very nature, incompatible with permanent, full-time day work, which will gradually give way to shift work, short-time evening working, vertically and horizontally structured part-time working, night work and holiday work. We can, therefore, forecast that, in this field, there will be a major increase in atypical employment relationships, marked, furthermore, by considerable insecurity. The people who will presumably continue to be involved in this type of work will be mainly young people and, in particular, women with average or low levels of schooling. By contrast, in other service industries, flexible forms of working will be seen in the context of the enterprise's organizational structure, in which various factors are at play: the size of the enterprise, the technological innovation involved and the level of exposure to competition.

In these cases, it would seem more appropriate to use a model that is more fully applicable to the industrial situation. In other words, to achieve flexibility, enterprises will, rather than dismantling Taylorist labour markets, juxtapose different models of employment relationship in different occupational areas.

Thus, several models concerning skills and employment relationships will be able to coexist within a single enterprise.

The strategic resource in employment relationships of this type is opportunities for vocational training and development. The quality and duration of such training and the authority that enterprises and, more rarely, workers have over it determine the type of employment relationship to which workers will have access. The longer and more complicated the training and the rarer it is on the market, the more likely it is that workers will have access to secure jobs and further training opportunities. The more workers are able to control their own course of training, the more power they have in their relations with employers.

This is how, in a climate of deregulation of the labour market, various bartering systems become established.

At the lowest level, the acquisition of labour that does not require either training or continuity tends to produce insecure employment relationships, as in the case of fixed-term contracts. Young people with poor levels of schooling may be the major users of this labour market. At a slightly higher level, labour that does not require training but does imply a need for continuity and reliability is exchanged for employment relationships that provide normative guarantees but does not exclude the possibility of dismissal when a worker's skills become obsolete. Workers in this group will be mainly middle-aged people with an average level of schooling and older workers. For a substantial proportion of workers, the ability/willingness to become the object of major investment in technical and organizational training is exchanged for secure employment and access to career paths of varying length, within a relationship based on trust. It is in this area that we find models of work organization that require the responsible participation of highly skilled workers. Rapid promotion, high salaries and less rigid organizational structures are offered to people whose skills are rare on the market and who can undertake complicated

technical and managerial work. These are the "professionals", people whose skills are acquired as a result of complex training and professional experience and whose career paths are based on mobility, moving from one company to another, from employment to self-employment, from industry to the service sector. In these cases, stable employment depends more on the professional's choice than on the employer's wish.

This coordinated modulation of company policies is reflected in the use of different recruitment channels (specialist and general) and the application of different criteria (general and specific), depending on the qualities and skills the enterprise wants for the various occupational areas; and it is also reflected in the varying quantity and quality of direct investment the enterprise makes in training.

The model that seems most likely to prevail in the next few years is, in brief, the one that provides for heavy and increasingly sharp segmentation of labour markets. From workers' point of view, the most important aspect concerns the possibilities they will or will not have to move from one labour market to another or, rather, whether they will remain stuck in the markets that offer fewer normative and social-security guarantees, as well as the lowest pay and the fewest career opportunities. From this viewpoint, it is possible to predict that the people who will suffer the most will most likely be those with lower levels of education, although even an educational qualification will not be a sufficient guarantee against a person's role in a particular enterprise becoming obsolescent. Women, on the other hand, will continue to be the major users of all forms of flexibility concerning personal services. Women continue to be subject to heavy horizontal segregation. It should also be borne in mind, however, that the 1980s saw the emergence of strong signs of the easing of the horizontal and vertical segregation that has traditionally affected women. From this perspective, we can predict that, together with a predominance of women in the lower-profile areas of flexibility, we may also begin to see women in other segments of the labour market. In terms of trends, the clear

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dualism and segmentation of male and female labour markets seem to be being replaced by a model that indicates a reduction in differentiation on the basis of gender and a concomitant increase in distinctions within each gender.

The process of making work more flexible, because it implies the breakdown of a model of permanent employment, has the direct consequence of increasing the number of people with broken employment records.

Although the current economic and social changes affecting Western economies make new models of "working culture" seem desirable, models in which the various types of work can be matched with a range of options at different phases of people's lives, we can see that, under current circumstances, specific difficulties arise from the fact that flexible, temporary types of employment relationship do not, because of their structure and because of the features of the current Italian welfare system, guarantee the same conditions of protection and pay as other types of employment relationship.

As regards welfare, the problems can be traced primarily to the difficulty of achieving the minimum contribution and insurance period to be eligible not only for a good pension, but merely for a pension.

The problem of rights also ranges from aspects concerning income protection, both as regards guarantees of equal treatment in terms of pay for "normal" workers and "flexible" workers and as regards rights to take advantage of possible forms of unemployment benefit for periods of unemployment, to all the other institutions that cover workers at any time (sickness and maternity benefits, pensions and trade-union representation, including time off for trade-union activities and rights and powers of representation in general). The problem from the normative point of view, then, is one of how to define different rules and standards that are appropriate to the different types of discontinuity of employment but which also

provide a common base of protection for all workers.

We can also predict the risks for increasingly large groups of people who will be obliged to undertake temporary, often unskilled, work without any recognition or possibility of advancement. Yet it is also possible that the medium term will see a predominant use of flexible forms of employment that will lead to the exploitation rather than the disposal of human capital.

The economic implications of this approach lie primarily in the fact that the exploitation of human capital should also respond to enterprises' needs if we consider that, for countries such as Italy, the response to competition in the medium-term cannot be based purely on reducing costs but must also be grounded in the quality of products and, therefore, in the "high" quality of the labour force employed in enterprises. Our hypothesis is that both the individuals concerned and the national economy will benefit most from a system that replaces discontinuous employment with methods of increasing the flexibility of working capacity that are nonetheless controlled and regulated in accordance with standards that prevent the "de-professionalization" of workers and encourage the establishment of paths of entry into working life which consolidate people's experience, sense of responsibility and specializations, particularly in the case of disadvantaged (poorly educated) groups.

Hence the need to define appropriate guidance mechanisms that will provide support for processes of transition and training in its various forms (training in social and vocational skills and training aiming towards employment and employability) for young people who are entering working life via discontinuous employment.

2.3. **The adverse, multiplying effect of different forms of exclusion**

In analysing the relationship between education and social stratification, various studies (eg Husen, 1987) have pointed to the persistence of various forms of inequality in schools and in schools' relationship with the social environment. Even when there is no inequality of access, there is still inequality as regards leaving rates, repeat rates and results. This means there is inequality with respect to the skills acquired and the outcome of schooling, sanctioned by examinations and formal tests; and with respect to the appropriateness of educational results, once people have completed their studies, to their social position. Other research (Susi, 1989) has shown that people with a low cultural and educational standard make less use of social services than other people do; they are not as well represented in participatory structures; they are heavily excluded from cultural activities; they take less advantage than other people do of training opportunities; and they tend not to watch television programmes with a cultural or educational content.

Generally speaking, it might be argued that there is still a close relationship between the quantity and quality of education received and occupational integration - not only because education is the source of skills that can be directly applied on the occupational level but also because it increases the range of things that people know how to do: from knowing how to improve their own level of training to knowing how to access and use information, as well as knowing how to interact with their environment.

From this viewpoint, then, uneducated unemployed people find themselves in a very disadvantaged position both as regards the possibility of gaining immediate access to the job market and, above all, as regards the possibility of improving their own position, over time.

In brief, the chances of finding work are not shared equally among job-seekers.

With respect to job-seeking and its outcome, there are particularly significant differences between:

- those who have a minimum available income and those who do not;

- those who have an average or high level of schooling and those who have a low level of schooling or no schooling at all;

- those are well integrated socially and those who are not (in the sense of having a network of friends and acquaintances in society and of being able to use that network as a source of information and a resource for finding work).

The extent and seriousness of these differences are aggravated by the fact that they interact so that the marginalizing effect of each individual difference is reinforced. Thus anyone who does not have a minimum income, has a low level of schooling and enjoys little socialization and information finds themselves in a vicious circle that is highly prejudicial to their chances of finding work.

Another significant aspect of exclusion from the world of work can be traced to the nature of the demand for labour in the geographical area in which an unemployed person lives. Obviously, there is a greater chance of exclusion in areas where job opportunities are few or in any way insufficient or inappropriate to the hopes and expectations of the labour force. This means that there are levels of exclusion that derive from particular contexts: in Southern Italy, for example, unemployed young people are faced with a stagnant demand for low-quality labour. But the local environment also has an impact by defining the limits of the social acceptability of a given situation, which means that, from the viewpoint of the people involved, the seriousness of exclusion is measured against the features of the local job market.

In recent years, destabilizing processes have led to the development, in all wealthy nations, of unusual forms of marginalization and exclusion that are unprecedented in terms of both quantity and quality. In other words, the traditional and already extensive phenomena of social disadvantage have increased and changed in character. Today, their manifestation takes the form of the re-emergence and consolidation of traditional forms of poverty (unemployment, economic hardship, social displacement, illnesses and disabilities, alcohol and drug dependency) and the rise in new forms of poverty (single mothers, the elderly, abandoned children, young people who have no independent income and are deprived of any solid cultural or ideological points of reference), which are also the result of the crisis concerning the role and function of the family, which is not being sufficiently counterbalanced by forms of socialization and solidarity that are appropriate to the new processes taking place.

Many contemporary analyses see marginalization, including total marginalization, as the result of people falling through the net of the various social positions they might occupy during the course of their lives (Saraceno, 1990). According to this theory, the people who are at risk are those who remain in the areas of instability and marginality that lie between the two extremes that form the conceptual boundaries for a person's life: at one extreme, there is the condition of total social integration (which depends on the "holy trinity" of occupational stability, family stability and residential stability); at the other, there is the condition of total marginalization. In research on this subject, this theory (eg Offredi, 1989) is accompanied by other contributions (eg Castel, 1990) that explain social exclusion as the product of a twin dynamic of lack/shortage/precariousness of income and fragility of relationships. From this viewpoint, if we liken the individual's biography to a tree, where every node is a centre that the individual may choose to move towards or away from, extreme marginalization would occur with the onset of fragility caused by loss of contact with one or several of these centres (Negri, 1990). These interpretative examples, which we felt it useful to include here, are

indicative of the fact that exclusion, of whatever degree, does not have a single cause but always arises from the negative accumulation of various causes.

Some authors (Milano, 1990; Townsend, 1990; Schulte, 1990) agree that the economic approach usually adopted by policies to combat social exclusion is incapable of dealing with this phenomenon, which is traditionally linked to the problem of income levels. This may be true of traditional social exclusion, but the current re-emergence of the problem has led to a re-examination that focuses more on understanding the causes and morphology that are peculiar to the new forms the phenomenon is taking today.

One aspect that is significant to training and guidance and appears in all the most recent studies on this subject is the fact that actual or potential marginalization is now a social risk for an increasingly large proportion of the population: unemployment, under-employment, low levels of schooling and social skills and family breakdown, in conditions in which guarantees for the most vulnerable members of the family are non-existent or inadequate are recurrent situations that can give rise, either alone or in conjunction with other discriminating factors, to a general condition of social vulnerability that can end in total marginalization.

Although these are now the prevailing assumptions, their translation into concrete definitions presents various difficulties. In this respect, the first Government Commission set up in Italy to analyse poverty (Commissione del Consiglio dei Ministri, 1987) adopted, in accordance with the majority of international studies, a definition of poverty as a "multi-dimensional, accumulative and complex" phenomenon, rather than as a phenomenon that can be ascribed to specific situations of disadvantage (lack of work, lack of education, lack of housing, etc).

If we accept this hypothesis, how can we redefine intervention policies concerning training and guidance?

Provisionally, we can answer this question by referring to the distinction whereby the population group at most risk comprises people suffering from four specific types of disadvantage: underdog status in the game of educational selection; lack of occupational and geographical mobility; heavy competition with other job-seekers because of the scarce demand for labour; penalization for coming from a run-down social environment.

With respect to lack of geographical mobility, in particular, four main factors have been identified as inhibiting the movement of unemployed people:

a. the difficulties and costs involved in settling in an urban environment;

b. the lack of guarantees concerning income and the duration of temporary or irregular work (hence the difficulty of seeking stable employment);

c. the standardization of standards of living at national level produced by welfare policies to raise incomes in the South;

d. the growing importance of family and local support in the living strategies of unemployed or under-employed people.

This contextual framework, necessarily described very briefly here, seems to be significant in determining how knowledge and social know-how are acquired outside the formal education system and how they interact with more formal learning mechanisms. This is why it is useful to consider the various aspects of the problem in an integrated fashion, with particular emphasis being placed on:

a. *Forms of socialization*

As a process of social interaction that takes place throughout an individual's life,

from the formation of primary relationships within the family (primary socialization) to the establishment of later relationships (secondary socialization) outside the family (in connection with education, work, leisure, etc), socialization is one of the fundamental aspects of culture and cognitive processes.

Youth is a crucial time of transition from primary to secondary socialization, since it is the beginning of a phase of expansion of people's "vital space" (Lewin, 1972), as they extend their system of personal relationships to include not only family-type relationships with strong emotional ties but also other, more varied and complicated relationships. This phase is of vital importance in the process of creating a personal identity, during which adolescents need to feel there is some coherence between their self-perception, their subjective images of themselves and the perception that other people have of them in their home, study and work environments; thus, they work towards a balance between the home and external environments and reach new conclusions concerning their personality to reduce the potential for internal conflict that emerges as the gap grows between their social identity and their subjective perception of themselves.

In this transition from family socialization to the formation of an adult identity, particular significance attaches to the socialization process that develops within the peer group: it is in the peer group that the individual can try out new relationships, public roles and specific skills (Eisenstad, 1971).

Socialization (Berger and Luckmann, 1969) is a process of internalizing social reality which takes place through the internalization of a symbolic universe, with the individual using his or her own cognitive map to redefine the values and behaviours that predominate in various reference "worlds", each of which has its own meanings, affective structures and rules. Possible incongruences between the contents internalized by the individual during the socialization process are resolved by reconsideration, at every subsequent socialization experience, of the contents

previously internalized, which may then be modified if incoherences persist. This means that socialization, as a process of internalizing rules and values, enables the individual gradually to build up his or her cultural frame of reference in a positive, non-conflictual way.

Discontinuities in the socialization process are linked to objective environmental conditions, the nature of any social mobility and socio-cultural changes. Mention should, therefore, be made of the fact that environment has an impact on the construction of behaviour and value systems that, in turn, strongly influence the education system's potential and ability to influence the individual's growth. Both primary and secondary socialization play a fundamental role in the creation of basic meanings that are highly integrated and bristling with emotive implications and which may or may not later serve as root stock for the grafting of basic and vocational skills.

This is the premise followed by several education researchers, who believe that every type of learning is of a social nature, since, from infancy onwards, the acquisition of knowledge and abilities is heavily determined by the cultural values, behaviour patterns and relationships that are encouraged by the environment in which the learning process takes place and in which its contents are defined. Learning, as the acquisition of cognitive material, experiences and relational abilities that enable the individual to act positively in a given environment, is the basic building-block for social and occupational integration of any kind.

From this viewpoint, it seems logical to pay particular attention to the interactions between the training system and the social environment in the complex task of identifying priorities for potential action at the educational level, especially with respect to various culturally deprived areas.

b. *The value system with respect to training and employment*

Our comments in the previous sub-section suggest that it would be useful to reflect upon the value the relationship between training and work has in this relational framework. Education has been and is still often labelled as a vehicle of progress, an instrument for economic improvement and mobility, a guarantee of success in the working world, an investment that families and individuals make in a fulfilling personal future and a factor that might guarantee access to higher social levels for the less prosperous.

This view of education has been criticized by numerous researchers who have long since demonstrated (eg Thurow, 1975) that social inequalities cannot be resolved simply by increasing levels of education.

It should, however, be pointed out that, although education is not sufficient in itself to ensure higher social standing or employment, it is often a necessary condition, since levels of education are of vital significance in occupational integration and, by and large, in social integration, both because of the well-documented objective usefulness of knowledge and know-how and because of people's self-perceptions with respect to education and work. As regards this latter point, it has been demonstrated that there is an evident change in the attitudes of young people for whom work is no longer (Accornero, 1980) the major reference in determining their social identity but takes a less central role in the life of the individual.

Other authors have shown that shorter working hours and better working conditions (Inglehart, 1983) permit a change in lifestyle which is associated with a crisis in the work ethic that may, particularly in the case of young people, be reflected in a "rejection of work". There is now a growing diffidence towards these extreme interpretations, which appear to be the product of a "stereotypical assessment that every generation makes of the next" (Cavalli, 1984, p 51). Furthermore, even if the

change in young people's attitude to work is obvious, it does not seem plausible to interpret the collective scope of that change by attributing it solely to the material changes undergone by work.

It is, then, plausible to maintain that, for young people, work is "nonetheless" one of the most important aspects of their lives, even though their motivations and expectations in its respect have changed.

c. *The importance of the friendship network*

Associations, grass-roots movements and voluntary organizations are significant factors in socialization and, in deprived areas, assume the character of an essential resource (Fabbroni and Montanari, 1991; Nicoli and Martino, 1986; Ricolfi, 1990).

Youth associations have been recognized as having three main areas of influence:

- the first concerns the socialization function performed by the peer group - a significant function, in that it encourages experimentation with new roles in a relatively safe environment, thus allowing the gradual consolidation of the young person's independence of the family;

- the second concerns the formation of the young person's personality - in the setting of a youth association, the young person is forced to develop a more complex, challenging configuration of his or her models of identification;

- and the third concerns the fact that young people's experience of youth associations can reduce the risk of marginalization and juvenile delinquency, since such associations offer models for active participation in the community.

This final aspect has been thoroughly proven by various pieces of empirical research (eg Patanè, 1991 and Zurla, 1991) that have identified the youth association network as a vital factor in containing delinquency, whilst at the same time encouraging the processes of social, cultural and occupational integration.

d. *The interaction between individual strategies and life paths*

A crucial role in social and occupational integration is played by individual strategies, that is, people's ability to develop life plans by making use of information on their environment and of their network of social relationships.

The paths used in job-seeking are of particular interest, not only because this marks the traditional passage from youth to adulthood but also because study of the methods used enables us to identify young people's predominant values and expectations.

The process that is currently taking place, whereby the chronological pattern of life phases is breaking down, with life no longer being divided in the traditional manner into the rigid sequence of education, work and retirement, has not weakened the very strong expectations that young people still have as regards the belief that study is a prelude to securing a job that is compatible with the knowledge and skills acquired during their years of study, and that work itself is of vital importance to personal fulfilment (Cavalli and De Lillo, 1988 and 1993). Statistics indicate, however, that these expectations are bound to be failed in the majority of cases, particularly in Southern Italy. With respect to the tacit promise of occupational integration on completion of their studies, young people, especially in the South, feel they have been cheated: "the emotional investment, sacrifice and commitment seem suddenly devoid of any value, as if one were presenting oneself on the job market wanting to cash in a promissory note in a currency that has been

devalued" (Cavalli, 1991, p 362).

Repeated experience of the ineffectiveness of traditional channels to guarantee social and occupational integration, and recognition of the growing difficulty of acquiring adult status and the rights that go with it, such as the right to work, have one's own home, be in a position to start a family, have caused significant changes in collective outlooks, and especially in the values shared by young people and, therefore, in their life strategies.

In particular, recognition of the structural shortcomings and inadequacy of the institutional agencies supposedly responsible for social and occupational integration has led young people to attribute greater importance to the informal channels formed by their networks of friends and relatives, or to what Bourdieu (1980) called the "social capital" that is available to everyone.

With respect to the possible role of guidance, there is, then, a clear need to redefine the working models and even the very nature of guidance if it is to have any impact, particularly with low-skilled young people.

3. The need to redefine the terms of the problem

The analysis provided in the previous chapters enables us to proceed now to a discussion of actions and interventions.

For this purpose, it seems, however, necessary to specify our terms of reference, not only for epistemological reasons but also to enable us to define a more precise strategy. We shall, therefore, take a closer look at the key words in our title: needs, guidance, young people and low skills. Each of these terms is analysed here in the light of our earlier considerations, so that new definitions can be reached.

3.1. Low skilled

In the course of our lives, we all extend ourselves by gradually acquiring new knowledge as a result of constantly analysing, defining and transforming our experiences. This slow process of personal growth is accompanied by an increase in the quantity and quality of the information we acquire, in the level of sophistication with which we process that information and in our awareness of what we know and how we can develop and transmit our knowledge.

The act of learning, which is dependent largely on our mastery of language but also on our ability to use other symbol systems, is based on the dynamic relationship between knowledge and experience.

Identification of the best possible strategy to adopt in a given situation is based on the application of the general learning, specific skills and formal knowledge acquired within an organized study programme, as well as of knowledge gleaned in other ways.

Vocational skills, in particular, emerge not only as a result of formal training but

also as a consequence of the "grafting" of practical experiences onto theoretical and practical knowledge. Vocational skills are developed as people gradually become aware of their own resources; they are further developed as people, now aware of those resources, apply their knowledge in situations other than those in which that knowledge was originally acquired; and they are refined in working situations, in which they are decoded, reinterpreted and restructured depending on the working conditions involved.

This means, then, that vocational skills are the result of a training process that cannot be fully covered by any formal training structure or completed solely by the exercise of a vocation. They may vary from one person to another but they are always a personal resource comprising knowledge and skills that enable each person to tackle various circumstances over the course of time. The majority of people do not, in fact, acquire their skills simply by following an ordered sequence of training activities that are programmed, organized, monitored and assessed. Rather, the path to skills is a chequered one in which sundry experiences of formal education and working practice alternate, in which cognitive resources of a very varied nature are gradually linked to form a recognizable skill. It is a difficult and challenging process in which, whatever the end result, basic learning and language and mathematical skills are a resource that interacts with practical abilities.

This means that "low skilled" may be defined as the absence of the abilities required to perform defined tasks or as the incapacity to establish links between the abilities required and the knowledge possessed in order to tackle a given situation. In these terms, the problem may concern skills defined as both "basic" and "vocational", not simply because both types of skill are present, but also because the underlying processes are interconnected.

It is useful to separate the various elements that comprise a vocational skill when we wish to define training programmes, but such a separation is inappropriate when

we are analysing the action taken by an individual to tackle the situations with which he or she is faced at work or in seeking an occupation.

According to an Italian dictionary definition (Devoto G and Oli G C, Vocabulario della lingua italiana, Le Monnier, Florence, 1979), skill means "the full ability to deal with certain issues". This definition helps to clarify the fact that the term "low levels of schooling" is used to indicate what people can and cannot do in real situations, rather than to express judgements based on educational categories, inappropriately applied in non-educational contexts. This is one of the criticisms that emerge from cognitive investigations that have, among other things, evidenced the lack of any functional compatibility between the offerings of the training system and the knowledge required in specific social and vocational situations.

Vocational skills (or "expertise", to use the term used by the studies cited here) can be described as a complex, coordinated ensemble of abilities and capacities deriving from a conceptual and practical synthesis of theoretical elements, associated partly with the content of academic disciplines, and concrete experiences. They are the end result of both initial and continuing training. They materialize in coherent forms that are, in part, determined by the organizational environment. They are evidence of a level of sophistication that derives from objective possibilities and subjective capacities for analysing, comprehending and impacting on that environment. They may develop in ways and places that are not necessarily associated with training.

Basic skills in any work that implies a minimum of initiative are pertinent to "decision-making" and "problem-solving" in various forms at different occupational levels.

Problem-solving is the end result of a process of processing information that is either already possessed or can be accessed and may be used in various ways

depending on the issue being tackled. Problem-solving situations are, in fact, often associated with problems whose solution requires a partial or total restructuring of the knowledge already possessed by the problem-solver. It is logical, therefore, that the ability to solve problems is often equivalent to an ability accurately to perceive those problems; the end result of a process of comprehension and representation; the outcome of strategies for the original conceptualization and organization of information; at times, the product of a creative approach to pertaining conditions and of adjusting to new situations. Decision-making is directly connected with the way in which problems are perceived and the pursuant mental processes.

In the end, skills are not absolute. Rather, they are a dependent variable that interacts with the organizational context in which they are placed. They take on their own character and dimension in particular environments, in the job, sector or occupation in which they are "situated".

From this viewpoint, "low skilled" is a term whose definition is dependent on the knowledge and abilities inherent in a given context. It takes on a connotation that is linked to forms and relationships between the content of knowledge, its use, monitoring, definition and redefinition. A failure to adapt to these forms and relationships thus takes the appearance of a lack of the appropriate tools to allow a constant and vital reprocessing of possessed knowledge, to acquire new knowledge or to make new use of existing knowledge to solve problems or make decisions.

Abilities and knowledge are also developed in the context of a process that is not limited solely to contact with practical or theoretical situations but is also determined by social interaction with people with a similar or higher level of skills, with whom there develops a dynamic based on dialogue. The associated linguistic and cognitive exchange focuses, in various ways, on the "objects" of knowledge.

Such interaction is a determining factor in encouraging or discouraging the

potential for development that is inherent in each individual. It actually sustains individuals on an emotional level, enables them to share difficulties, analyse problems on a social level, make observations, express points of view, ascertain whether or not other people agree with those viewpoints, and construct, in their respect, the conceptual framework that is needed for the further acquisition of knowledge and skills.

In various ways, the "social environment" serves as a guide for the processing of knowledge, encourages the collection, comprehension, analysis and systemization of experiential data, and allows the individual to construct a framework of knowledge.

From this viewpoint, the working environment may or may not be an educational one and skill levels, be they high or low, are defined on the basis of working abilities in the given situation (or any other situation that may be presented) and not in reference to any shortcomings as regards a formal study programme.

Recent investigations, to which we shall return later, have taken precisely this approach to the relationship between training, skills and work. Despite the diversity of theories and concepts, however, there is a clear need to tackle the issue of skills and abilities in a way that is complementary to the question of the actions required by the organization. What is needed, then, is that attention be paid both to individuals' working abilities and the activity demanded by the organizational structure.

In this framework, skills become "contextual", linked to the environment, and "strategic", with respect to possible forms of decision-making and action-taking.

This definition, which confirms the need for a multidisciplinary approach in the analysis of vocational skills, enables us to move on to a definitive analysis, by

pointing to some possible responses and, more specifically, the need to (Meghnagi and Brunetti, 1993):

- link the notion of low skilled to that of skills;

- define "low skilled" only in relation to what is required of the individual as regards identifying the problems posed and decisions required by the given working context;

- analyse the term, taking account of dialogue among the various people acting within the same environment, be they those who manage it or those who work in it;

- in brief, define "low skilled", as we did initially, as a problem in restructuring relationships between one's abilities, be they "basic", "vocational", linguistic, mathematical or practical, to tackle current or future situations; and, thus, to see "low skilled" as an inability to restructure existing knowledge and perceive new ways of using it to solve problems or make decisions;

- perceive "low skilled" as a difficulty in using one's own initiative to transfer existing knowledge and abilities.

Skills cannot, then, be seen as an absolute but can only be assessed as regards their effectiveness within a specific context. It is within a specific context that abilities take form and substance. This means that "low skilled" has no meaning in itself but is, as we have seen, connected with the particular environments, social and occupational situations, sectors or occupations in which the people concerned are placed and with respect to which their skill levels are being analysed. "Low skilled" cannot be generally defined on the basis of predetermined parameters that

refer to a theoretical curriculum for training or work experience. Rather, skills must be assessed positively on the basis of what individuals can do, irrespective of how they have acquired their abilities, and with due consideration being given to any new experiences and knowledge that may reinforce their existing abilities. This approach implies two basic conditions: the introduction of participatory mechanisms and an end to the distinction that is frequently made between social and vocational skills.

This definition obviously complicates any diagnosis of low skill levels that may, for analytical purposes, use simple indicators relating to, for example, formal education or certified vocational training. Such an examination is helpful if, as in this report, we see it as describing a part of the overall situation, to be assessed on a qualitative level, on the basis of broad definitions of the issue under examination.

3.2. **Young people**

In the light of the content of the previous section of this report, low-skilled people form a heterogeneous group whose members differ not only in the characteristics connected with their education but also in those associated with a broad range of other variables, depending on their living and working conditions.

As in the case of adults, differences between young people are linked to their past and present experiences, the way in which those experiences are perceived and the consequent personal and collective world views that are developed.

This is why all the more serious studies of this subject (see Cavalli and De Lillo, 1993) are concerned to develop their analysis of youth issues by taking account of both subjective and objective aspects, since the information thus acquired is significant.

There are many important questions concerning the placement, in the current context, of population groups in a given connotative environment. In this section of our report, which is concerned with definitions, we shall merely cite some information associated with two complementary fields of research: changes in the labour market and changes in socio-cultural structures.

With respect to changes in the labour market, the problem does not simply concern the current qualitative and quantitative dynamic between supply and demand or, more specifically, between school leavers and job vacancies. Rather, it is the entire system that is changing, with changes affecting dynamics associated with production, employment, organization, management, decentralization, imbalances between development and underdevelopment and between urban and rural areas, and all the many ways in which less advantaged population groups are excluded from the system, being either expelled from it or prevented from entering it.

Studies from different disciplines (see Altieri, 1992) have clarified relations between the various economic sectors by identifying the mechanisms that lead to a build-up of imbalances between geographical areas and the methods whereby resources are distributed among different population groups. Considerable effort has been invested in, among other things, investigating conceptual approaches that might account for the increasingly clearly defined composition of social classes and segments of the labour market that remain outside traditional categories. In particular, studies have illustrated the size of the problem faced by people, and especially young people, who are at risk, in certain geographical areas, of continuing to be unemployed, under-employed or "semi-employed" for periods of varying length, even given the highest possible likely levels of development. Analyses of the social structure (see Pugliese, 1993) have pointed to potential members of the labour force who have left or been expelled from the production process or have been discouraged or held back from entering it. Those included in this latter category tend to be people who are unemployed but employable, mainly

women and young people above the age of adolescence, who supply the extensive market in undeclared labour, casual work and, in many cases, work in the submerged economy.

Economists (see Giannola, 1993) have used these data to describe the composition of the labour market, whose features are increasingly complicated by growing unemployment and the links identified between technology, innovation and geographical area.

According to a technical approach that currently enjoys considerable support and was defined some years ago (Berger-Piore [1980], 1982), the labour market can thus be seen as the "sum" of several markets, each of which has its own qualitative features that cannot be described on the basis of a single model.

The many market "models" give us, at one extreme, the primary sphere of the economy and regulated, protected labour, to, at the other extreme, the marginalized sectors and insecure employment in which unskilled young people tend to find themselves.

The division that emerges is not, then, simply a division between the employed and the unemployed, or between sub-groups within these categories, but is also indicative of other divisions between groups of individuals who can be distinguished both by objective factors, and particularly the cut in overall working times in contemporary society, and by subjective factors (ranging from low skill levels to people's self-perception with regard to the labour market).

Not only are young people in particular affected by the loss of work as a factor that provides them with a sense of identity, they also suffer from a problematic perception of themselves in relation to work, since employment is becoming an increasingly difficult objective to attain. This is why the most astute researchers are

now confirming, in respect to other population groups as well as young people, the trend that was first recognized in the 1980s, whereby we have moved beyond the "reductive, economic paradigm" (Paci, 1981, p 83) in which the complexity of social structures is concealed by the failure to analyse a whole series of social strata and groups, and especially those that lie outside the central sphere of production, including low-skilled young people.

The new, broader approach has helped to accentuate a shift of the focus of research to issues concerning social complexity and identity, with a concomitant crisis in the paradigms to be used to interpret current changes.

Having abandoned the simplistic division between employment and unemployment, researchers have begun to analyse the relationship between the sequential organization of working time in the long term, the day-to-day organization of working time, the various relational and symbolic worlds of the individual and the forms of identification made possible by the actual experience of work.

Recognition of the cut in working times, in both absolute and relative terms, has highlighted the contradiction, linked to closely interconnected structural and cultural variables, between social and occupational integration on the one hand and a person's real possibilities for gaining access to the labour market on the other. This question has various implications depending on whether we are dealing with men or women, and, if it is considered at all levels of analysis, the gender variable emerges as being particularly important in relation to work.

On the basis of this premise, with regard to the second aspect we are considering here, that is, changes in socio-cultural structures, we can see that biological age is only one indicator of an individual's likely level of maturity and is less important than the person's past as a marker of a particular phase in his or her passage through life.

Two concomitant phenomena are currently taking place throughout the western world: a drop in birth rates and a lengthening of life expectancy. Our society is characterized by rapid, radical structural and cultural changes that are taking place over varying time scales, both in terms of changes in production and employment systems and in terms of changes in the consideration and critical analysis of different groups, including, in particular, young people and women. According to recent analyses, women are the standard-bearers of value systems that link the change in relations between the sexes to the change in the relationship between productive work and the caring role.

This has also led to a change in the dynamics of relationships between the generations, which are going through an historically and culturally significant phase that is encouraging a tendency to relativize choices that were once seen as final (eg the choice of marrying or, where possible, working).

Young people's attitudes reflect this dialectic and are evidently not dependent only on the demographic variable, which is in any case linked to economic, social and cultural factors, with the result that the variety of possible life plans seems limitless. The lengthening of the period of time over which we can now make choices that once seemed decreed to follow a fixed order (studying first; then, but only for men, work; then, for both men and women, marriage; and finally, having children) is connected with a change in the attitudes of both sexes. The consequence of this state of affairs and, to a significant extent, the varied chronological order in which choices are now made is an increase in the uniqueness of each individual's biography, with fewer and fewer common denominators.

This implies a breakdown of the autocratic model of youth and, to a certain extent, of the boundaries that once distinguished youth from other phases of life. These phases are now determined by the various choices that people make between

studies, relationships and work - choices that are affected by objective circumstances and, at the same time, by people's assessment of the past, their perception of the present and their expectations for the future, in which there is an interplay of occupational circumstances and socio-relational dynamics.

Particularly in the case of low-skilled young people, these considerations can be further clarified if account is taken of certain categories of analysis applied by studies on social stratification.

Studies of this kind identify the situational and attitudinal features of social groups that are ignored by more traditional research. To a certain extent, studies on this subject as far back as the early 1970s paved the way for the abandonment of analysis based on predominantly structural and economic variables, by identifying various forms of "marginalization" that affect both adults and young people alike but would seem now to have more impact on the latter (and, conversely, on the elderly). The forms of marginalization identified are geographical (identifiable with international, national, regional and municipal "peripheral areas"), political (based on non-participation, because of exclusion or self-exclusion, in consultative and decision-making processes), economic (determined by occupational circumstances or position in the labour market and levels of participation in both production and consumption), cultural (dependent on abilities and knowledge, social attitudes, value systems and behavioural standards, whether personal or collective), ethnic, linguistic and "sectoral" (linked, for example, to gender).

Particularly useful, among other things, is the formula introduced some time ago (Germani, 1975) that broadly describes marginalization as "non-participation" in one or more spheres of activity or in fulfilling the roles deemed to be appropriate in a given society. This definition of the term, which leads on to the specification of marginalization as "partial non-participation" (p 64), takes account of the question of awareness of exclusion from exercising or benefiting from rights (be

they social, political, economic, cultural, etc), which, according to commonly accepted values, are seen as legitimate. All people who find themselves in this kind of situation, and not necessarily in relation to work, are, then, marginalized: marginalization "may concern participation in political life, access to certain forms of leisure and free time, to certain areas of a town, to particular kinds of holiday, etc. Logically, then, it is obvious that exclusion from certain rights is on the increase and is dependent on the growing awareness of the people who are thus excluded" (Germani, 1979, p 25). Examination of subjective aspects leads us to note that, although economic development may bring with it an improvement in living conditions and a drop in "absolute deprivation", there is a growing sense of "relative deprivation", that is, the belief that one is missing out on something other people have got, since a change in living conditions does not automatically transform needs and expectations based on past situations and values.

These investigations of subjective, relative aspects can usefully be linked, for the purposes of this report, with investigations on "complexity", in which an attempt has been made to describe the social structure and situation using a systematic conceptual framework to enable account to be taken of the impact of technological development, power structures, political functions, the role of institutions, social stratification and knowledge as interrelated variables. This interrelation actually makes it possible to grasp the dynamic and the connection that links the complexity of the social system with the problems facing the people who live in that system. Placed in such a context, the problem of young people's identity, which takes specific forms that are different from those of the past, can be seen in its full magnitude.

The concept of identity is a difficult one to use because of the many different meanings that can be attributed to it, either as a result of the frequent association of the term with highly diverse qualifiers ("personal identity", "collective identity", "female identity", "ethnic identity", "trade-union identity", etc) or because of the

many different disciplines to which it can usually be traced. On the other hand, even without entering into the question of the merit of the literature on the subject, with all its psychological, sociological and anthropological references, and even linked, in recent works, to training theories, we do simply need to note here that contemporary thought on the question of identity is moving inexorably towards considering it "not merely as a 'thing', as a monolithic, unitary description of a person, but rather as a system of relations and perceptions" (Melucci, 1982, p 68).

From this viewpoint, the aim in considering identity is to comprehend the relationship between individuals of various types and their experience of contemporary society, which is, in turn, an object of study. This enables us, thanks also to multidisciplinary references, to identify specific aspects of young people's experience.

The problem appears to be one of measuring oneself both against historical facts, in relation to social or class characteristics defined by an objective structural configuration, and against subjective perceptions, against the various identities and different levels of maturity and awareness of other individuals, in accordance with a world view that has been historically determined by the evolution of civil society.

In this context, low-skilled young people are defined as those who are unable to interact or work towards their own social and occupational integration by making use of their personal attributes and their usefulness and usability in cultural and power contexts that are socially defined, distributed and assessed.

An awareness of the general, progressive nature of change and of the context in which young people find themselves seems to be the prerequisite for understanding the cultural dimension of the dynamics of their attitudes and behaviour patterns, be they political, social, expressive, aesthetic or artistic. And the vulnerability of low-skilled young people must be assessed with respect to all these fields.

3.3. **Guidance**

The notion of guidance has traditionally been linked to the school system and, to a modest degree, the occupational system. Only recently have its meaning and spheres of reference been extended.

More specifically, the old conception of guidance as a means of directing people, essentially on the basis of an assessment of their character, towards particular training choices, has given way to a modern understanding of the term that perceives all forms of support for life passages as "guidance".

It has gradually been accepted that life passages do not necessarily follow a set order and may be extended over both space and time, including transitions from one form of training to another, from training to work, from work to training, from one form of work to another - with the result that it is now accepted that people of any age may require guidance.

The implications of this are huge.

If we analyse the issue from the point of view of service users, we can see that, in this context, any guidance that is to achieve its objective must involve action and decision-making concerning various possible options. The relationship on which guidance is based must begin with analysis of an ill-defined, uncertain or problematic situation, whose level of difficulty will vary from person to person, before that situation can be redefined. Since it has to be based both on the circumstances of the person concerned and on current employment conditions, guidance must provide for the acquisition of new abilities and a greater capacity for adapting one's existing abilities and attitudes. This normally occurs through a process of reorganizing existing information and applying means of acquiring new information. Essentially, it is a question of activating a cognitive process that may

be triggered by offering information, suggesting possible ways forward, helping people to decide what they are going to do and when and providing support for major life passages and even for simple actions that the individual may not feel able to undertake alone.

In this specific framework, various agencies have called themselves guidance bodies, even though they have limited their focus to the education system and labour markets, in the broadest sense. This means that the professional skills of the people offering these services, who come from various educational and occupational backgrounds, have been stretched in the continuous effort to assimilate an incredibly broad range of knowledge.

The programmes implemented and the spheres covered denote a real wealth of resources and, often, a considerable capacity for action and a remarkable spirit of initiative. Obviously, the breadth and quality of experience thus gained vary from one area to another and are the product of an enterprising approach to the practical issues that need to be tackled and, in many cases, of the creativity of the volunteers and professionals involved.

Yet these activities seem to lack any common reference framework, both because of the "militancy" of guidance bodies (even if it is that very quality that provides such a sense of motivation) and because of the current lack of any theoretical framework that might help to bring together the many meanings that, as we said initially, have come to be attributed to the term "guidance".

In schemes in which real-life needs and circumstances have been tackled, guidance has helped to highlight the contradiction implied by the gradual loss of meaning of scholastic education in terms of the knowledge and know-how required for social development, on the one hand, and, at the same time, people's need for an increasingly broad range of abilities if they are to enjoy any true social integration,

on the other. It has pointed to the role played by broader skills that cannot be gained by technical training alone but are based on people's ability to adapt their practical skills, gain access to information, analyse and understand the changes that are taking place. As a potential practical tool, guidance is part of a politico-cultural dynamic in which the right to education has become the subject of conflict and bargaining between enterprises, trade unions and the public authorities. It has promoted a debate on the content of training that can no longer be confined to a purely didactic discussion.

This has not, however, prevented guidance from being, except in a few cases, excluded from the broader debate on "recurrent training", whose aims include a radical alteration of training structures to make them capable of allowing everyone access to training by alternating periods of work with other activities throughout their lives.

The basic principle of recurrent training is that the right to education be guaranteed by training opportunities and institutions of which any individual can take advantage whenever they choose to do so.

In this framework, guidance takes on a value that clearly defines it as educational and not simply informative, which means that different working methods must be adopted for specific population groups, within the context of a coherent hypothesis concerning social and occupational integration.

In an even broader framework of lifelong education, of training that may be undertaken at any age, either within or outside the education system, we may speak of a "double continuity" (Schwartz, 1973), in both time and space, of educational activity and, in our context, of guidance activity.

Continuity in time must reflect the change, with age, of people's needs, attitudes

and ways of establishing relationships and perceiving their circumstances.

Continuity in space is based on recognition of two "alls" or "wholes": the "whole person", which is linked to the multiplicity of roles that are a feature of a person's life and have an impact on their way of being, of establishing relationships, of acting and of perceiving things; and "all the phenomena" that characterize the historical, social and natural situation, whose comprehension can be based on partial analyses only when they come together without contradiction to form an overall picture.

Temporal and spatial integration give rise to a continuity of growth, have an impact on a person's place in civil and democratic life and have a marked influence on their participation in that life.

A working hypothesis for guidance must take account of all this if we want to guarantee the necessary conditions for real equality as regards training, cultural and, where possible, occupational opportunities.

From this viewpoint, guidance for low-skilled young people is further informed by the use these young people make of the opportunities provided by guidance services.

Consideration of participation in training has highlighted the fact that, in the majority of cases, investment in training activities actually aggravates rather than alleviates cultural inequalities, since the resources made available are used predominantly by less disadvantaged population groups. People who have already received more training take advantage of the opportunities offered, take the initiative and exert pressure to get what they want. They make choices where other, less well educated people have neither the opportunity nor the ability to establish a positive relationship with culture and education. Often, people who suffer from low

levels of schooling are incapable of responding appropriately and positively to many of the requirements associated with their social and cultural circumstances. And, sometimes, apart from in the eyes of the people concerned, it is not clear what objective contribution education could make to solving problems that are not merely to do with training.

School does nothing to eradicate the initial inequalities, to make good the deficiencies suffered by children from economically and culturally disadvantaged social groups; to a significant extent, vocational training provides less educated young people with a chance to improve the skills they have, which virtually never allow them full social integration; adult education is still incapable of adequately filling the current cultural gaps between different population groups.

This raises a complex problem for the guidance of low-skilled young people. Even if we succeed in overcoming the by no means negligible difficulty of establishing dialogue with them, we still find ourselves faced with the fact that cultural opportunities that are meant to be non-selective imply indirect discrimination, in that they exclude the most disadvantage groups.

This is why we need to place guidance within the framework of a strategy of positive discrimination, with a view to implementing an effective policy for "equalizing" training opportunities.

People with poor levels of schooling and low skill levels are characterized by a cultural deprivation that is generally an expression of other, more far-reaching forms of marginalization. Any plan for the training and social integration of these people cannot, therefore, be limited to the provision of information. Guidance must, rather, be linked to an action and training plan that takes account of all aspects of individuals' and groups' lives, if they are to be directly involved in change.

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Finally, if working and living conditions are the determinants of disadvantage, then guidance, as a support for change, must take account of them if the aim is to facilitate the identification of possible ways forward for the individuals concerned.

3.4. **Needs**

The most valuable consideration of needs, in the educational sphere, may be found in research on participation in training by young people and adults with little schooling. Most of this research was conducted in the 1970s and 1980s and paved the way for an abandonment of the traditional "market-based" approach, in which "need" and "demand" had to have a counterpart in "supply". They also encouraged recognition - long emphasized as vital (Heller [1973], 1974) - of the relativity of the concept of need, since analysis of needs is never absolute but is always linked to moral values and social, cultural and political convictions. There was confirmation of the need to consider the existence of a value base in any definition of needs and the subordination of empirical data to those values. Evidence was put forward of the constant danger of reductionism in defining the demand and need for training when they are not seen in the context of complex, general social needs and demands, including latent ones that are often not expressed or defined.

A reminder of the distinctions and clarifications used in this field of research, which we feel are compatible with our investigation here, seems valuable if we are to examine the needs and demands associated with guidance. We shall, therefore, look at the basic aspects (and refer the reader to Meghnagi, 1986 for a more detailed account).

Although they may seem problematic, terms such as "demand" and "need" can be clarified and usefully applied if we assume a link between requirements for knowledge and know-how and the need and demand for training.

We can, in fact, speak of an explicit demand for training, the manifest expression of desire declared with respect to a specific training or cultural activity. An explicit demand for training is, however, dependent on numerous variables, including objective circumstances, subjective needs and perceptions of reality. This means that it is also valid, in conceptual terms, to speak of implicit demand, meaning demand that is not expressed; but we must assume that such a demand can exist, that, for reasons we shall analyse later, it is weak and that it may, potentially, become manifest.

If the appropriate objective circumstances prevail or are created, a demand for training may be matched by participation in appropriate training activities. Participation, where it exists, may allow an understanding of the nature of the demand and its development over varying lengths of time.

It has already been noted that participation in training is strongly connected to social participation, while the manifestation of demand is often determined by objectives that concern mainly groups rather than individuals. We can, then, speak of a dialectic relationship between demands expressed by individuals and demands formulated (after processing and interpretation) by representative bodies. From this perspective, the concept of implicit demand for training, according to our earlier definition, seems to be valid and, bearing in mind the variables indicated earlier (objective circumstances, subjective needs and perceptions of reality), it would seem reasonable to maintain that implicit demand may become explicit only if various resources (social, cultural, political, trade-union, etc) are dedicated to that purpose, whilst the consequent participation in training activities, where it occurs, may allow for clarification and maintenance of the demand.

A need for training may also be seen either as an objective lack or as a subjective perception on the part of the people concerned. In the former case, it is vital that we establish criteria for defining "lack" if we are to conduct a more in-depth

analysis. From this viewpoint, although it does not seem appropriate to use the word "demand" as defined on the basis of statistics, eg levels of schooling, there is little doubt that this indicator describes objective "lack". In the latter case, we must distinguish between spontaneous needs and induced needs; to make this distinction, too, we need to define our analytical criteria. What we can state, however, with some certainty, is that a subjective need may give rise to the expression of a demand, while an "objective" need may either give rise to the expression of a demand or actually block that expression.

At this point, it is appropriate to wonder whether it is in fact possible to identify and interpret demand for training.

What we are faced with is various problems that are responded to in different ways, depending on the terminological conventions adopted; according to the definitions applied here, there are two correlations: between an objective and subjective need for training and between an explicit and implicit demand for training.

It is possible to identify (objective and, to a certain extent, subjective) needs and explicit demands for training by using the instruments of social research and investigation. By taking the appropriate approach, we can gain knowledge of certain aspects of the problem that will help us to define training initiatives.

However, although it is possible to discover what people say they want, or how they use the training opportunities and structures available to them, or even what they read and how they use cultural resources (libraries, theatres, etc), knowing what people say and how they behave is, in a sense, of little value. Hence the value and limitations of work in this field of research, which can help us to understand a particular context, clarify the meaning of certain behaviours and elucidate the underlying reasons for the choices made by certain population groups, particularly

with regard to specific issues, but nonetheless merely enables us to formulate hypotheses concerning demand for training.

Pedagogical research has begun to look at the problem of needs and requirements concerning knowledge and know-how to identify demand for training, mainly in relation to the debate on the theoretical opportunities and means adults with little schooling and few skills have to participate in training activities.

The results of this research are, therefore, of value in an analysis connected with guidance, even if, as we have tried to do, we limit ourselves to a few major categories of analysis, such as demand and need. Here, too, the hypothesis of an analysis of needs is useful, provided it is not mechanically applied as a procedure to produce indications concerning a demand to be matched to a supply that, in this context, would be based on an assumption of stability, whereby there would be, on the one hand, people without knowledge and know-how and, on the other, in an absolute sense, knowledge and know-how to be transmitted.

Even the contribution of psychological or social research on participation might be reduced to a technical issue deprived of any cultural depth. Conversely, the very real question of analysing needs and demands has a very valid place in any examination of young people's attitudes and perceptions, even if, as we have done, we limit the field to the issue of training and guidance; and it is also full of implications, in that it prefigures a comparison of requirements linked to living and working conditions and the organized system of educational and social services.

For young people with limited skills, the guidance problem concerns breaking the patterns that reproduce situations of dependence involving both users and providers of social resources.

Marginalization is caused by two distinct mechanisms: the poor socialization and

organization of people who do not take advantage of available resources, and the tendency, on the part of those who manage, coordinate and organize those resources, to maintain the status quo as regards their function, nature and distribution.

Work and lack of work, of course, decide income levels and, consequently, cause the discrimination between those who can gain direct access to consumption and those who cannot; employment and unemployment, of course, often determine practices and the specific ways and conditions of access to public services. But behaviour patterns consolidated in a specific context, the general emotional environment, mutual perceptions and methods of interaction have specific consequences as regards social orientations, arrangements and groupings, which may or may not give rise to participation, action and the shared use of resources.

For all these reasons, an understanding of social processes may allow conceptual clarifications concerning the social factors at the root of participation. In the educational sphere, this is a subject for which there is no comprehensive theory to refer to. The information gathered usually concerns people who enter into training or gain access to a service, not those who remain outside the system. There is, therefore, a need to develop a cognitive approach that considers both those who do and those who do not take advantage of training and services, including the specific case of guidance - an approach that is based on an analysis of the processes, forms, locations and causes of participation by trying to assess the needs that are expressed and formulate hypotheses concerning those that are not expressed, to respond to explicit demands and identify implicit ones.

We can speak of a "culture" of participation, either as a spontaneous activity or in the context of organizations and institutions. Any culture has its own forms and levels of complexity and awareness and is associated with certain ways of perceiving the past, present and future. This means that analysis is all the more

complicated, but, when the dynamics of social processes are characterized by a fragmentation of interests and forms of adhesion to shared values and lines of action, simpler procedures are inadequate.

To succeed in the complex task entrusted to it without ignoring the weaker population groups who do not spontaneously take advantage of services, guidance must incorporate actions that make it possible to understand the processes of participation, expression of needs and elucidation of social demands. This is how guidance can offer responses and, at the same time, have an impact on reality - with wide-ranging, critical consideration of the context in which it is conducted, starting with the people concerned.

All individuals must have the cognitive and functional resources they need to enable them to act (Corda Costa, 1980) as citizens who have the necessary fundamentals to take part in civil and political life, as producers with the functional capacities that enable them to exercise a profession and as consumers of goods and services, including luxury ones.

Needs are linked to all the categories mentioned here and guidance must take them all into account, even if guidance activities usually have to be limited to direction and support associated with one specific category.

A paradigm connected with the use of training services, and with participation in general, seems to be the need to refer to both psychological and sociological aspects, as well as cultural aspects, by considering both the micro and macro-levels of people's living and working environments.

A broad range of studies that attempt to tackle the problem of poorly educated adults' and young peoples' participation in training, from the psycho-social viewpoint, have been conducted by the educational-research department of the

University of Stockholm, where there is a strong emphasis on comparative aspects at international level.

These studies, whose findings and theoretical bases are described in works of the late 1970s and 1980s (see, in particular, Rubenson K, 1977), reveal that the motives that prompt people to study include a strong desire to acquire knowledge and skills that can be practically applied; also significant are motives associated with the need to change occupation, for people who are in low-skilled jobs, or to improve one's position, for those who are in jobs with an average to high professional content. In particular, for people under the age of 30, preparation for a stable, satisfying job is one of the main motives that prompts people to study and acquire vocational training, with the past few years seeing a particularly large number of women wanting to move from the role of mother into the labour market. And the changes that are affecting social roles seem, on the whole, to be promoting participation in training, which is seen as a means of easing the tasks and situations the individual has to confront.

On a more general level, it may be argued that cultural interests are greater among people from the middle and upper-middle social classes, although they are also present among people from lower social strata; and the significance attributed to meeting other people and socializing, by people participating in courses for adults, seems to be greater among people who have fewer opportunities to establish a range of social relationships (eg housewives). There does not usually seem to be any significant gender difference in the motivations of older people, and the passage from work to retirement seems to push people towards training activities that are seen as a profitable way to use time, as an instrument that may help them to adjust to their new role, and as a chance to "do something they haven't had time to do before".

At the opposite extreme, negative experiences of school during childhood have a

strong impact on people's scepticism about training. The rejection of training activities for adults seems to be stronger among people who either have no experience of training or have had a negative experience in a training environment; and the rejection seems to intensify with age. In particular, outside obstacles are as much, and often more, to blame than psychological blocks: the possibility of using paid leave from work as study time has a strong influence on participation; and financial grants, which are sometimes available, seem to have a noticeable effect only with respect to particular social groups. It is working conditions, motivation, the opportunities offered by training and the fact of having free time to study that are most important.

Essentially, participation in education is not separate from people's lives or social roles, which are constantly changing in the face of new challenges and are dependent on, among other things, people's expectations and aspirations and the values held by the groups with which they come into contact.

On the basis of these premises, drawn form various research works, Rubenson (1977) attempts to define an analytical "paradigm" for participation problems, by taking the concepts of value and expectation as determining behaviour: "value" expresses an emotional attitude to the outcome of an initiative and is linked to the opinion the individual has, from the outset, of the outcome the initiative may have; "expectation", which is associated with value, is a temporary conviction concerning the probability that a particular action will be followed by a particular result. Value and expectation are deemed important because the strongest psychological obstacle to participation seems to be (Abrahamsson, Kim and Rubenson, 1980) the conviction that life would not improve after completion of a course for adults and that the course would bring no benefits on the occupational level.

Participation essentially depends on the value individuals attribute to training and on their belief that they would, thanks to the training, be able to respond better to

external requirements and, therefore, be able to influence their own life.

All individuals are motivated (Benseman, 1980) to try to attain a social position that is compatible with their opinion of themselves, and they avoid change when their social position is satisfactorily reconciled with the established framework of their own world. Self-esteem, as a general or global value, determines the outcome of any initiatives undertaken and is built up through interaction with others. The opinion individuals have of other people and of the surrounding environment is connected with the opinion they have of themselves, on both the cognitive and the emotional level. People who have a high level of self-esteem are usually more likely to attain their objectives than are people with low self-esteem, which also depends on previous successes and failures, as well as on people's abilities and opportunities to impose their own choices.

It is in this context that we need to consider the influence of peer and reference groups. The peer group is one in which the individual is a recognized member (eg family, political or religious group, etc), whose values the individual shares, and in which the individual has learned to satisfy his or her needs in accordance with commonly accepted rules. However, people also make use of the rules and standards set by other groups of which they are not a recognized member and which, therefore, have the status of reference groups. Thus, if training opportunities linked to the interests of individuals are less well attended than those based on group values and requirements, it is logical to assume that the same must apply to all guidance activities and that, although useful, information and incentives aimed at the individual are inadequate; it would be more productive and, sometimes, necessary to work with groups who have a shared sense of belonging and identity.

In brief, participation is influenced by past events as well as the current situation, by individual and collective aspects, and by psychological as well as cultural and sociological factors. Participation depends on both supply and demand, and the

current situation does not have an impact in itself - rather, that impact depends on the way in which individuals and groups see and perceive their situation. Situational factors interact to create a "social climate" in which the individual may or may not perceive the possibility of acquiring, through training, more power to control the environment.

This is why it is useful to ascertain people's ability and willingness to participate, taking account of cultural and educational levels, their environment and the factors within that environment that may promote or inhibit participation.

More than is the case when dealing with children, it is essential, in any educational activity aimed at young people or adults, to remember that the students concerned have already gone through learning processes in the past.

They may have acquired knowledge at school, through the media or through cultural institutions, but they will have learned far more from observing or undertaking work, from living, from their leisure activities, from their residential environment and from the type of relationships available to them. However, although we might legitimately claim that we are constantly educating ourselves every day of our lives, it is nonetheless valid to make distinctions concerning the "quality" of that day-to-day education and to question the positive value, in educational terms, of many urban areas, of homes in which co-habitation is hard work or general conditions are unpleasant, of the ways in which people are often forced to live their lives.

We can, then, speak of "natural, lifelong education" (De Sanctis, 1975), which is not ascetic but is, rather, very diversified and connected with social and production conditions. Training processes within institutions and in the various spheres of our lives should, then, be borne in mind, with emphasis being placed on the function of formal educational activities as an opportunity for a critical review of messages and

learning derived from experience, from relations with the environment and from social relationships.

However, as we have noted, people who suffer from low levels of schooling or who live in deprived conditions of whatever nature do not spontaneously take part in educational activities and, therefore, simply providing opportunities for training or the provision of information is not enough to ensure they are used by the people who need them.

As has long since been demonstrated (Boudon, 1973 and 1979), of the various forms of social inequality, inequality of opportunities (whether training opportunities or opportunities to change one's status) is, together with economic inequality, the inequality that seems the most immune to change and the most insensitive to development in industrialized nations. From this viewpoint, the extent of the problem of participation depends on the real possibility of guidance and training having a rapid and marked influence on people's living conditions.

Guidance must, therefore, be incorporated in the framework of a dynamic process in which psychological and social elements play a part and are taken into account in working practice. There is, then, little sense in speaking of "participation" if we do not see it as an integral part of a process that intertwines with other aspects of people's lives to guide them towards more positive forms of development.

This means that analysis of training needs and demand is linked to the notion of lifelong education. Consequently, we must place the concept of guidance within the framework of this notion if we are to formulate working hypotheses that are compatible with the requirements of the population group we are discussing here - low-skilled young people.

4. Hypotheses and proposals

The hypotheses and proposals formulated here draw on the broad range of experiences analysed and systematized in specific studies (see, in particular, for Italy, the reports edited by ISFOL on the activities of the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education and Ministry responsible for the Regions). Our aim is to lay down, in general terms, the key ideas and principles that, in the light of our analysis, emerge as being of essential, fundamental importance to the vocational guidance of low-skilled young people.

The feasibility of putting these ideas into practice may vary from area to area: every environment will require its own specific structures and organizational methods for a vocational-guidance service.

4.1. Guidance within a framework of lifelong education

The concept of lifelong education includes all the cultural and social aspects of life. Lifelong education shows us that knowledge and know-how can be acquired at any age, in the appropriate manner, and anywhere.

It confirms the educational value of time spent working and not working, of time spent with family and friends, time spent in the office, in the house, in a bar or in the library, time spent producing and consuming, time spent on culture, sport and travelling. Lifelong education implies paying attention to processes that take place in various places and at various times, all of which have an impact on the perception and cognition that groups and individuals construct of themselves and their environment.

The areas traditionally defined as curricular and extra-curricular, on the basis of an accepted meaning that often has them vying against each other, are, within a

framework of lifelong education, closely intertwined in a process in which they are both given equal educational status.

In envisaging a framework of lifelong education, we are not referring to a particular sector of education but rather taking a viewpoint, whose coordinates need to be defined, from which we can tackle training issues in all their dimensions and aspects, including guidance.

The Council of Europe report on lifelong education (Schwartz and De Blignieres, 1978/1982) indicates the three key concepts of universalization, participation and equal opportunities as the bases for intervention and research concerning various training sectors.

Children, young people and adults all have universal experiences: they are all children, students and members of groups and associations; they are all workers, parents and members of a political party or trade union. Lifelong education must take account of this universality. The practice of training must incorporate it in its entirety. A policy of lifelong education must, then, be developed, among other things, within defined geographical areas in which it is feasible to deal with the entire range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, structures that are intended for educational purposes and those that are not.

Participation is both the aim of and prerequisite for the development of lifelong education. The participatory management of decisions concerning the community at various levels demands the commitment of everyone involved. It may be true that participation and training are linked and that the more "educated" one is the more one is capable of taking part in the management of public affairs. But participation can be learned only by practice and it is unreasonable to expect everyone to be "educated" to participate. In any case, social participation promotes the demand for further training, thus serving as a huge incentive for a growth in demand for

training.

Equal opportunities are not merely an objective of education policy but are a principle without which there can be no true democracy. In this respect, the education system has a primary role to play: it must enable everyone, whatever their origin and social background, to acquire useful skills and knowledge. For this, it is not enough simply to timetable periods to "compensate" for the gaps in basic learning and cognitive deficits that accumulate during the school lives of many children from the more disadvantaged social classes.

Equal opportunities can be made a reality only if we accept and apply a principle that is, in practice, highly innovative - the principle of positive discrimination. A school that wants to offer everyone equal educational opportunities must be "unequal", that is, it must take account of initial differences, in both qualitative and quantitative terms, and give more to those who have less by investing more resources (in terms of time, teaching materials, teachers, etc) in children who have the greatest difficulties.

Yet a policy based on positive discrimination should not be limited to the school environment. The concept, if taken as a guide for educational and cultural intervention, changes the nature and form of that intervention: it implies action and intervention that ranges from the education system to the social system, from formal education to local cultural activities and, in the context of guidance, from the provision of information to the monitoring of activities and experiences. And this must all be undertaken in accordance with criteria whose aim is to ensure the greatest commitment where there are the greatest needs.

Used as a criterion for choosing the way in which to work, positive discrimination can give rise to a meaningful commitment to the cultural development of people with low levels of schooling and skills.

Positive discrimination implies that people are seen as the privileged consumers of intervention.

This means that resources are used to provide the necessary support for schemes whose purpose is to combat the various forms of social, cultural and instrumental illiteracy suffered by people who are not traditional consumers of guidance and training activities.

In Italy, guidance is now appraised on the basis of its capacity to reach these potential consumers, people who do not take advantage of any of the training opportunities available to them, people who express little or no demand for training.

This is the area in which research needs to be developed to study the possible ways of promoting guidance and training for people with low levels of schooling or with inadequate basic cultural tools.

This framework of lifelong education implies research that also takes the form of action, which, by adopting the criterion of positive discrimination and placing the focus on these disadvantaged "client groups", helps to develop the training of yet other client groups, since it recognizes that the problems of disadvantaged groups cannot be solved in isolation.

4.2. **A support for various transition processes**

The initial problem is the extremely complicated one of participation in and use of guidance structures by people who are the most in need of them, and of providing appropriate responses once these people do begin to make use of them. In this respect, our analyses suggest the following hypotheses and indications:

a. The use of guidance structures and opportunities by low-skilled young people is heavily influenced by the socio-environmental context and the type of "culture" present in that context.

The term "culture" is used here in its broad, anthropological sense, and it is on the culture present within an overall environment that action must be taken.

Various research works have shown that the value attributed to social participation and education depends on the environment in which an individual has lived or is living. Political, religious, trade-union and occupational groups may or may not be the individual's peer group and/or reference groups. People learn to satisfy their own social needs by turning to groups with which they can identify, either because they are part of the group or because they aspire to be part of it. This applies not only to methods of "access" (eg affiliation to or membership of a political party or trade union), but also to the way in which people feel they want to take part (eg by accepting the group's ideology or by being amongst other people who discuss that ideology and shape it in different ways).

It is in relation to these various groupings, but also, in a broader sense, in connection with the overall environment with which they come into contact, that people develop a positive or negative attitude towards participation.

Training or information activities based on the interests of individuals are, for this reason, far less effective than programmes based on collective needs, defined in close connection with group needs that derive from living and working conditions, social relations, etc.

Participation and associated use of an available guidance service or centre

whose aim is to work with young people who are experiencing difficulties cannot be achieved by trying, with varying degrees of failure, to influence and raise the awareness of individuals (which is nonetheless important); rather, we need to work in collaboration with various social groupings to solve local problems by means of a collective undertaking that makes use of all the strengths latent within the community.

Thus, we establish a link between social participation, utilization of services and training.

b. A global approach to young people's living conditions encourages the development of participation by population groups with a low level of culture and schooling.

It has been noted that research on participation in training tends to focus on variables such as gender, age, socio-economic situation, etc. These variables are subordinate to motivation and are merely an indirect reflection of real processes: perversely, people who do not participate are described on the basis of indicators drawn from observation of those who do participate. What we are proposing is the replacement of the methods used in this type of research and intervention with action that encourages people to participate, by analysing the factors that stimulate or inhibit participation, beginning with the characteristics of the social environment, and, above all, by seeing participation in terms of the overall life circumstances both of individuals and of the groups in which they are involved.

The approach we are proposing is a dynamic one based on a systematic refusal to deal with problems in isolation and analyse them from just one viewpoint. For example, if a low-skilled young person is not making use of a structure or service that he or she needs, it is assumed that this is a result

not only of the young person's attitude but also of the way in which the service is offered, of the factors that encourage or discourage the potential user. But there is another important factor: training and guidance opportunities and, to an extent, work itself may not be the young person's primary need. What we have to do is to assess, again looking at the young person's situation in its entirety, how guidance and what it has to offer can help to solve problems that are not to do with training or work, how to combine actions that would otherwise remain separate and would not produce the desired effect. To clarify this aspect of the problem, we can use an example drawn from another kind of experience: a clinic that wants to promote health education for women may set up a training programme. Some women would attend whilst others would either be excluded or exclude themselves, simply because it is a course or because it is held in a school or for other reasons. Yet there are times in life, such as during pregnancy, when the need for knowledge obviously becomes more intense. It is a question of observing how the health system makes use of this unique opportunity to move from simply monitoring the progress of a physiological process to conducting a more far-reaching educational activity for small groups, in the clinic itself, either while women are waiting for their appointments or at other times, but all on an informal, ad hoc basis.

With respect to low-skilled people, the problem needs to be approached in a fairly similar way, not so much because of psychological aspects but more because of the fact that, at various times in people's lives, the life issues with which guidance needs to be interlinked come to the fore.

c. The development of participation and the global approach to problems determine the development of forms of positive discrimination and a general push towards equal opportunities.

One of the most serious consequences of negative school results lies in poorly educated individuals' lack of faith in their cognitive abilities. Their school life is an experience in which they have known failure, an experience they have found frustrating, that they now fear and, subconsciously, wish to avoid repeating. They have very poor self-esteem as regards study and see all their shortcomings and inadequacies. Exclusion from education at a young age leads to forms of exclusion and self-exclusion later in life. Furthermore, in the course of their lives, individuals' social roles are constantly changing, as are the tasks they are required to perform and their own expectations, demands and needs. For this and other reasons, the obstacles to social participation and training are also likely to change.

The outside obstacles at the root of an, often involuntary, process of exclusion or self-exclusion can be removed if action is taken gradually and opportunities are flexible.

From this viewpoint, equal opportunities become crucial in the development of a guidance process, because analysis of the difficulties encountered in processes of participation or universalization reveals a considerable amount of useful information that can be applied in the practice of guidance.

Positive discrimination can take place at various levels. The hypothesis put forward here is that consideration of the social environment triggers a process that can increase the educational capacities of that very environment.

Guidance for people who express little or no demand for it requires many forms of intervention if it is to succeed: the principles of universality and positive discrimination must be constantly present, though to varying degrees, for a long period before we shall see mass participation by the most disadvantaged population

groups. It is not usually the most marginalized groups who immediately come forward to participate.

If it is disadvantaged people who are the target group, it is essential to ensure that guidance does not simply take the form of a response to individual needs, which are nonetheless entirely legitimate, but is open to collective needs. We can develop demand by responding to the initial demand, whatever that is, and at the same time envisaging further action that reflects the need to respond to new demands. This action may take various forms, ranging from the provision of information to structured training, but the common denominator is the "monitoring" of young people, who can then be given formal and informal support by their counsellors during phases of transition in their lives.

4.3. **Four recommendations**

In our analysis, we have tried to define the outlines of a problem about which it is difficult to generalize.

Our working synthesis is based on this perception of the problem, recalling the essential axes of guidance for low-skilled young people and putting forward four recommendations that we feel might be useful for practical purposes. Our recommendations are that:

a. the significance of the geographical area in which guidance is to be offered be taken as a starting point.

   Decisions concerning intermediate objectives, whose purpose is to establish relationships and support low-skilled young people in their journey towards training and work, must serve as a guide for choices concerning the content of the various phases of guidance, the methods and instruments to be used,

timescales and costs, with reference also being made to an assessment of factors that encourage and obstruct relationships with disadvantaged social groups.

What seems important, in terms of both practical work and research, is not so much the "static" identification of the variables at play but more the dynamic aspects of guidance activities and, in particular, the procedures used and changes realized in the course of those activities. Guidance activities must include the provision of information, courses, seminars, opportunities for temporary work and any other cognitive experience that is of interest to and for people who would otherwise not take part in initiatives that might serve as a basis for further cultural and vocational training.

A project set up in accordance with this approach will not offer an indiscriminate range of activities covering the broadest possible spectrum but will rather, by taking disadvantaged groups as its priority target, avoid setting any restrictions on the type of information and training to be provided - because only activities that have been agreed with the people concerned will guarantee their participation. Projects must, then, be organized to give positive responses to a variety of demands; sometimes, these responses will be provided by the workers managing the project; at other times, recourse may be had to various structures that may be present at local level.

In brief, working methods must make it possible for activities to be flexible, as well as providing for monitoring of those activities.

b. It is crucial to bear in mind the importance of on-going examination of the reasons why low-skilled young people do or do not take part in initiatives or respond to incentives and opportunities.

The "recruitment" of people targeted as participants in guidance and training activities has been little studied, especially in Italy.

Research on the subject tends to describe participants on the basis of variables such as age, gender, prior education, occupational status, etc, without making any in-depth analysis of people's reasons for participating. Even in cases in which investigations have touched on this subject, no attempt has been made to construct a theoretical model or an effective working model concerning participation.

A clearer conceptual framework regarding the reasons why low-skilled people do not register for training courses or why they abandon them, and why they tend not to use the services available to them, including guidance structures, might enable us to improve the quality and quantity of schemes aimed at this particular population group.

If we are to analyse methods of encouraging participation, by seeking to identify what it is in various schemes that attracts or repels different social groups, we must reflect on methods of informing people and making them aware of the cultural, educational and guidance activities available to them.

c. Provision be made for a variety of methods and procedures that ensure that guidance functions as a real training activity in its own right. Any educational activity worthy of its name must be based on a precise definition of objectives and assessment methods, and this is all the more important when these activities are flexible in terms of content and method.

In the case of low-skilled population groups,the importance and nature of non-cognitive, socio-affective objectives will depend on the age of the people concerned. Every age marks a period of development of a person's

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identity, with each of these periods differing in terms of people's levels of biological and psychological maturity, the experiences they have gathered and the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

People with low cultural and educational standards are often not able clearly to describe their situation when they turn to a structure that is supposed to help them to make choices, which is why any proposal, indication or action must be preceded by a preliminary process to establish relations and communications between structures and services, on the one hand, and young people, on the other.

The general organization of guidance activities must, therefore, comprise various levels at which structured and flexible components are interlinked in accordance with the aim of each activity and, in particular, the complex characteristics of its users.

d. Any guidance activity must be carefully monitored.

This aspect is implicit in our previous recommendation and we merely wish to make it an explicit recommendation in its own right.

The construction of a working plan obliges us to take a different attitude to the problems involved here. This means that decisions concerning objectives must, in different ways and in different roles, involve everyone, from guidance workers to the people they wish to guide. If young people are helped to look at themselves and accept guidance in a non-subservient role, then a plan is being followed. This is the course of action followed by, for example, someone who finds themselves faced with a new situation and studies it in order to tackle it; and this is precisely what people are incapable of doing if they have been prematurely excluded from education

> and see learning as something indefinable that lies beyond their control. A positive attitude to one's own learning abilities is one of the essential aims of a kind of guidance whose purpose is to do more than provide people with information, without ever knowing the outcome.
>
> If we take this approach, we move beyond a conception of knowledge that sees practical skills as the only meaningful, valid end result and begin to see the purpose of guidance and of education itself in terms of the development of a whole host of assets: skills and the ability to apply them, and the ability to adjust to the acquisition of new skills and to use them to reflect on one's experiences; the development of a whole range of new resources to plan one's own actions and future initiatives. This approach makes it possible to develop an educational hypothesis which, like the one put forward here, is based on the importance attributed, as both cause and effect, to life experiences and which goes beyond this, with the very people concerned being involved in analysing how problems are lived and how much awareness people have of their own situation and of reality as a whole. Similar problems are perceived differently by different individuals and groups and this is a factor that guidance has to take into account.

In more general terms, to incorporate guidance within the framework of lifelong education implies an assessment of the political, cultural, scientific, technical and practical difficulties that need to be faced in developing processes of participation, universalization and equal opportunities.

Action based on the three key concepts of lifelong education implies radical changes in the environment - not bureaucratic or administrative changes, not a process that can be determined by the individual will, but changes of scientific, cultural and political import in the local or broader environment.

Participation requires collective training: training in which educational activities - and, in our context, guidance activities - are part of a much larger movement, in which action of any kind is transformed into self-training that aids and guides people in making decisions and living their lives.

Universalization requires collective training, too: training that cannot be delegated to any particular structure, since every educational and social establishment assumes a shared educational purpose within an overall scheme. Universalization does not merely mean the integrated use of resources but also implies coordinated action based on interrelated objectives. Equal opportunities also require collective training, in the forms we have already described.

Equal opportunities imply the involvement of teachers, social workers, administrators, policy-makers, trade-unionists, etc. Positive discrimination, which is the most effective way of guaranteeing equal opportunities, implies a battle against current selection procedures in schools, whereby people are labelled as failures and given certificates which do not reflect the knowledge and skills they have truly acquired. It also requires, after careful analysis, the transformation of all the activities, initiatives, management methods and (often latent) dynamics involved in the "self-government" of social structures and institutions, which in some cases exclude, marginalize and alienate the very people for whom they have been officially set up.

A process of this kind can certainly not be based on any abstract training proposals, and nor is it workers' and trainers' role to act as "consciousness-raisers".

Our hypothetical collective action must lead to greater awareness of the various problems present in the social environment. Its function is to translate life problems and life situations into guidance and training problems, and training must accompany these interacting problems without ever assuming that it can solve any

one of them - it must simply be seen as a means of helping the people involved, and especially people from culturally disadvantaged groups, to gain greater knowledge and awareness and a greater ability to act.

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Annex I

Exclusion from work: data

This first annex comprises a set of tables containing data concerning the extent of and trends in exclusion from work.

In introducing these tables, it is worth starting with general unemployment figures in Italy, where, according to ISTAT data, 2 865 000 people were unemployed in 1989; the figure had increased by 600 000 since 1983, whilst, during the same period, the available labour force had increased by more than one million people. Population growth over the period 1983-89 was modest, with an overall increase of 608 000 people. This was the result of two distinct trends: a slight population reduction, by 139 000, in regions of Central and Northern Italy; and an increase of 748 000 in Southern Italy (see Table 1). This differentiated demographic trend, which is likely to continue over the next few years, is associated both with the increase in the number of women going out to work (especially in the South, where it is reasonable to expect the figure to continue to rise until it is in line with the level of female employment in other areas), and with the size of the labour force, which is very constant in the South. The figures highlight the heavy geographical divide as regards unemployment (see Table 2), with a difference of some 13 percentage points between Central, Northern and Southern Italy in 1989.

Of job-seekers, only 507 000 have any work experience; 1 405 000 are first-time job-seekers; and 954 000, representing a sizeable proportion of the total figure, are other job-seekers (see Table 3). This latter group is mixed, comprising people who are not currently working (students, housewives, pensioners), who, though they are registered as being outside the labour market, have claimed to be in search of a job and immediately available for work. Women account for 70% of this category,

which represents 42% of female unemployment but only 21% of male unemployment.

Unemployment in Italy is characterized by a sizeable youth component, since, despite the recent increase, only 30% of the unemployed are adults (ie over the age of 29) (see Table 4).

Although the demographic structure of unemployment shows a certain geographical homogeneity, in that unemployment is concentrated among young people and levels of unemployment fall as age increases, there are nonetheless some geographically specific features, including, in particular, the fact that young women in the South suffer levels of unemployment that verge on exclusion from the world of work (see Tables 5 and 6).

In Southern Italy, rates of occupational activity show the presence of a minor push for emancipation by young women, probably not so much for cultural reasons but, above all, because of the discouragement caused by limited job opportunities, as is demonstrated by the very low level of employment. In Northern Italy, on the other hand, young women have developed an attitude similar to that of young men, and it is only in the 25-29 age bracket that there are any evident differences between the genders.

Nonetheless, the fact that two thirds of unemployment is accounted for by women in Northern and Central Italy indicates the persistence of considerable discrimination in the world of work.

With respect to the rate of female unemployment by age bracket, it may be noted that there are again marked differences between North and South, and the exception to the rule represented by women over the age of 60, for whom both the rate of employment and the rate of occupational activity are higher in the South,

can be explained by the influence of the high percentage of women employed in the agricultural sector (see Table 7).

There is also a heavy differential between male unemployment rates in Central/Northern and Southern Italy: there is virtually no unemployment among adult men in Central and Northern Italy, whereas, in the South, the level of unemployment among men under the age of 30 is nowhere below 20%.

As regards the breakdown of unemployment by level of education, the most significant pointer is that, among unemployed people in the South, there is a very high percentage who have not completed their compulsory education.

It is also significant that, among adult women, the largest category among unemployed women consists of those who have not completed their compulsory education. As well as being connected with the fact that earlier generations of women tended to have low levels of education, this is also indicative of the fact that the lack of a school qualification is something that limits women's chances of entering the job market.

And this is not contradicted by the fact that, generally speaking, the highest rates of unemployment are among people who do have a school-leaving certificate, followed by those who have no school qualification (see Tables 8 and 9).

Failure to acquire a school-leaving certificate, which has tended to become a compulsory requirement for access to work, is increasingly leading to a very critical situation, in which people are at the highest risk of marginalization and long-term, or at least recurrent, unemployment.

The nature of long-term unemployment in Italy is clearly evident from the figures (see Table 10), which we can assume are largely, though not exclusively,

accounted for by the situation in the South.

Young first-time job-seekers and people who do not have a school-leaving certificate, in particular, have a longer average wait before finding a job. These long waits may be interpreted in different ways: for a person with a high level of education, it may mean they are waiting for the right type of job; whereas, for a poorly educated person, it may indicate they are having difficulty in finding a job.

Examination of the structure of unemployment in Italy points to four basic discriminating variables: gender, area, age and level of education. It is the various combinations of these variables that make it possible to identify the different degrees of seriousness of the problem. The main feature that emerges is that Italy has two separate employment/unemployment systems with very different characteristics: one in Central and Northern Italy, and one in the South.

Table 1: Population broken down by gender and occupational situation (various years)

	M	F	MF	M	F	MF	M	F	MF
		Italy			Central/Northern Italy			Southern Italy	
				(absolute figures, in thousands)					
Employed									
1977	13,893	6,045	19,938	9,472	4,461	13,933	4,421	1,584	6,005
1983	13,969	6,597	20,557	9,369	4,840	14,209	4,591	1,757	6,348
1989	13,851	7,153	21,004	9,339	5,343	14,681	4,513	1,810	6,323
Job-seekers									
1977	670	868	1,538	363	492	855	307	376	683
1983	992	1,272	2,264	514	735	1,249	478	537	1,015
1989	1,220	1,646	2,865	424	747	1,171	796	898	1,694
Occupationally active									
1977	14,563	6,913	21,476	9,835	4,953	14,788	4,728	1,960	6,688
1983	14,952	7,869	22,821	9,883	5,575	15,458	5,069	2,294	7,363
1989	15,071	8,799	23,870	9,762	6,090	15,853	5,309	2,708	8,017
Occupationally inactive									
1977	12,355	21,435	33,790	7,620	13,510	21,130	4,735	7,925	12,660
1983	12,410	20.997	33,407	7,657	13,054	20,711	4,753	7,943	12,696
1989	12,598	20,369	32,967	7,708	12,469	20,177	4,890	7,900	12,790
Total population									
1977	26,918	28,348	55,266	17,455	18,463	35,918	9,463	9,885	19,348
1983	27,362	28,866	56,228	17,540	18,629	36,169	9,822	10,237	20,059
1989	27,669	29,168	56,836	17,470	18,559	36,030	10,199	10,608	20,807
				(absolute variations, in thousands)					
Employed									
1977-83	76	552	619	-103	379	276	170	173	343
1983-89	-118	556	447	-30	503	472	-78	53	-25
Job-seekers									
1977-83	322	404	726	151	243	394	171	161	332
1983-89	228	374	601	-90	12	-78	318	361	679
Occupationally active									
1977-83	389	956	1,345	48	622	670	341	334	675
1983-89	119	930	1,049	-121	515	395	240	414	654
Occupationally inactive									
1977-83	55	-438	-383	37	-456	-419	18	18	36
1983-89	188	-628	-440	51	-585	-534	137	-43	94
Total population									
1977-83	444	518	962	85	166	251	359	352	711
1983-89	307	302	608	-70	-70	-139	377	371	748

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

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Table 2: Changes in the unemployment rate, by geographical area (1980/89)

Year	Total		Men		Women	
	Central/ Northern Italy	Southern Italy	Central/ Northern Italy	Southern Italy	Central/ Northern Italy	Southern Italy
1980	5.78	11.45	3.47	7.53	10.18	20.17
1981	6.70	12.19	4.05	8.07	11.57	21.55
1982	7.27	12.97	4.64	9.02	12.06	21.94
1983	8.07	13.77	5.21	9.41	13.18	23.39
1984	8.68	13.96	5.34	9.51	14.42	23.87
1985	8.67	14.73	5.43	10.02	14.19	24.98
1986	8.50	16.48	5.26	11.40	13.88	27.22
1987	8.38	19.23	5.22	13.63	13.53	30.69
1988	7.75	20.61	4.71	14.55	12.69	32.73
1989	7.39	21.13	4.34	14.99	12.26	33.16

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 3: Job-seekers, by category and gender

	Absolute figure, in thousands					
	Central/Northern Italy		Southern Italy		Italy	
	1983	1989	1983	1989	1983	1989
Women						
Unemployed	109	130	54	91	163	221
Job-seekers	402	302	280	426	682	728
Others	225	315	208	382	433	697
Total	736	747	542	899	1,278	1,646
Men						
Unemployed	114	114	77	172	191	286
Job-seekers	303	201	314	476	617	677
Others	103	109	89	148	192	257
Total	520	424	480	796	1,000	1,220
Total						
Unemployed	223	244	131	263	354	507
Job-seekers	705	503	594	902	1,299	1,405
Others	328	424	297	530	625	954
Total	1,256	1,171	1,022	1,695	2,278	2,866
	Percentage figures					
	1983	1989	1983	1989	1983	1989
Women						
Unemployed	14.81	17.40	9.96	10.12	12.75	13.43
Job-seekers	54.62	40.43	51.66	47.39	53.36	44.23
Others	30.57	42.17	38.38	42.49	33.88	42.35
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Men						
Unemployed	21.92	26.89	16.04	21.61	19.10	23.44
Job-seekers	58.27	47.41	65.42	59.80	61.70	55.49
Others	19.81	25.71	18.54	18.59	19.20	21.07
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total						
Unemployed	17.75	20.84	12.82	15.52	15.54	17.69
Job-seekers	56.13	42.95	58.12	53.22	57.02	49.02
Others	26.11	36.21	29.06	31.27	27.44	33.29
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 4: Job-seekers, by age and gender, 1989. (Absolute figures in thousands and percentage figures)

	Central/Northern Italy			Southern Italy			Italy		
	M	F	MF	M	F	MF	M	F	MF
14-19	86	135	221	148	143	291	234	278	512
	20.33	17.56	18.86	18.59	15.92	17.18	19.20	16.88	17.86
20-24	136	224	360	258	289	547	394	513	907
	32.15	29.13	30.72	32.41	32.18	32.29	32.32	31.15	31.65
25-29	73	141	214	163	194	357	236	335	571
	17.26	18.34	18.26	20.48	21.60	21.07	19.36	20.34	19.92
30-59	124	244	368	220	270	490	343	515	858
	29.31	31.73	31.40	27.64	30.07	28.93	28.14	31.27	29.94
60 and over	5	4	9	7	2	9	12	6	18
	1.18	0.52	0.77	0.88	0.22	0.53	0.98	0.36	0.63
Total	423	769	1172	796	898	1694	1219	1647	2866
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Calculations using ISTAT data

Table 5: Unemployment rate, by age

Age	1983 Central/Northern Italy			1989 Central/Northern Italy		
	F	M	T	F	M	T
14-24	31.67	21.75	26.52	'27.65	9.03	21.5
25-29	11.83	6.54	8.75	15.02	6.3	10.2
30-59	5.53	1.58	2.83	6.67	1.87	3.58
60 and over	10.58	2.68	4.68	2.08	0.87	1.18
	Southern Italy			Southern Italy		
	F	M	T	F	M	T
14-24	55.07	34.97	42.92	85.75	47.37	55.35
25-29	21.76	17.22	18.86	45.86	23.83	32.28
30-59	6.02	3.5	4.21	17.58	6.32	9.77
60 and over	14.61	4.91	0.27	2.15	2.43	2.36

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 6: Resident population in Central/Northern Italy and Southern Italy, by age, gender and occupational situation (1989)

	Women				Men			
	Central/ Northern Italy		Southern Italy		Central/ Northern Italy		Southern Italy	
Age group 14-24	A.V.	%	A.V.	%	A.V.	%	A.V.	%
Resident population	2,793	100.0	1,880	100.0	2,950	100.0	1,855	100.0
Occupationally active	1,302	46.6	657	34.9	1,400	47.5	857	46.2
Employed	943	33.8	225	12.0	1,179	40.0	451	24.3
Unemployed	359	12.9	432	23.0		7.5	406	21.9
Housewives	181	6.5	427	22.7	0	0.0	0	
Students	1,394	49.9	783	41.6	1,309	44.4	848	45.7
Unemployment rate		27.8		65.8		15.8		47.4
	Women				Men			
	Central/ Northern Italy		Southern Italy		Central/ Northern Italy		Southern Italy	
Age group 25-29	A.V.	%	A.V.	%	A.V.	%	A.V.	%
Resident population	1,272	100.0	829	100.0	1,276	100.0	756	100.0
Occupationally active	939	73.8	423	51.0	1,159	90.8	683	90.3
Employed	799	62.8	228	27.5	1,085	85.0	521	68.9
Unemployed	140	11.0	195	23.5	74	5.8	162	21.4
Housewives	261	20.5	364	43.9	0		0	0
Students	59	4.6	36	4.3	74	5.8	43	5.7
Unemployment rate		17.5		46.1		6.4		23.7

A.V. = absolute figure

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 7: Comparison of rates of occupational activity and unemployment, by age (Central/Northern and Southern Italy, 1989)

Age group	Rate of occupational activity			Employment rate		
	Central/Northern Italy			Central/Northern Italy		
	F	M	T	F	M	T
14-24	46.62	47.47	47.06	33.76	39.98	36.96
25-29	73.32	90.83	82.34	62.81	85.03	73.94
30-49	59.43	97.34	78.27	54.98	95.54	75.14
50-59*	27.86	76.66	51.64	26.93	75.18	50.44
60-64	9.28	33.16	20.53	9.21	32.80	20.28
65-70	3.78	12.78	7.79	3.70	12.59	7.75
>70#	1.14	4.57	2.48	1.10	4.50	2.42
	Southern Italy			Southern Italy		
	F	M	T	F	M	T
14-24	34.95	46.20	40.52	11.97	24.31	18.09
25-29	51.03	90.34	69.78	27.50	68.92	47.26
30-49	45.53	96.26	70.81	36.48	89.77	63.01
50-59*	25.60	80.49	52.28	23.71	76.48	49.31
60-64	10.82	39.76	24.42	10.47	38.98	23.87
65-70	3.81	13.24	8.19	3.81	13.03	8.09
>70#	1.19	3.45	2.13	1.07	3.30	2.06
	Italy			Italy		
	F	M	T	F	M	T
14-24	41.29	46.99	44.48	24.99	33.92	29.52
25-29	64.83	90.65	77.52	48.93	79.04	63.71
30-49	54.52	96.95	75.52	48.92	93.49	70.83
50-59*	27.17	77.88	51.86	25.91	75.59	50.10
60-64	9.76	35.21	21.75	9.60	34.72	21.40
65-70	3.79	12.93	7.94	3.73	12.80	7.85
>70#	1.18	4.16	2.38	1.09	4.11	2.32

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

* Unemployment rate for combined age groups 30-59
# Unemployment rate for combined age groups 60 and over

Table 8: Job-seekers, by gender, age and level of education (Italy, 1989)

Men	14-19	20-24	26-29	30-59	60+	Total
No qualifications Primary school certificate	22	31	31	202	2	288
Lower secondary school certificate	185	208	129	170	2	694
Certificate of education	71	269	148	120	1	609
Degree	0	5	26	23	0	54
Total	278	513	334	515	5	1,645
Women	**14-19**	**20-24**	**26-29**	**30-59**	**60+**	**Total**
No qualifications Primary school certificate	22	31	31	202	2	288
Lower secondary school certificate	185	208	129	170	2	694
Certificate of education	71	269	148	120	1	609
Degree	0	5	26	23	0	54
Total	278	513	334	515	5	1,645
Men and women	**14-19**	**20-24**	**26-29**	**30-59**	**60+**	**Total**
No qualifications Primary school certificate	58	68	62	377	10	575
Lower secondary school certificate	350	393	225	276	5	1,249
Certificate of education	104	438	239	170	2	953
Degree	0	7	44	36	1	88
Total	512	906	570	859	18	2,865

Table 8 (cont): Job-seekers, by gender, age and level of education (Italy, 1989)

	Percentage of total					
Men	14-19	20-24	26-29	30-59	60+	Total
No qualifications	15.38	9.41	13.14	50.87	61.54	23.52
Primary school certificate	70.51	47.07	40.68	30.81	23.08	45.49
Lower secondary school certificate	14.10	43.00	38.56	14.53	7.69	28.20
Certificate of education	0.00	0.51	7.63	3.78	7.69	2.79
Degree	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total						
Women	14-19	20-24	26-29	30-59	60+	Total
No qualifications	7.91	6.04	9.28	39.22	40.00	17.51
Primary school certificate	66.55	40.55	38.62	33.01	40.00	42.19
Lower secondary school certificate	25.54	52.44	44.31	23.30	20.00	37.02
Certificate of education	0.00	0.97	7.78	4.47	0.00	3.28
Degree	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total						
Men and women	14-19	20-24	26-29	30-59	60+	Total
No qualifications	11.33	7.51	10.88	43.89	55.56	20.07
Primary school certificate	68.36	43.38	39.47	32.13	27.78	43.60
Lower secondary school certificate	20.31	48.34	41.93	19.79	11.11	33.26
Certificate of education	0.00	0.77	7.72	4.19	5.56	3.07
Degree	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Total						

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 9: Rate of unemployment, by level of education, age and gender (Italy, Central/Northern Italy and Southern Italy)

Level of education	14-19	20-24	26-29	30-59	60+
	Italy				
Men					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	42.86	28.03	17.13	4.63	1.53
Lower secondary school certificate	30.16	19.50	10.08	3.14	2.31
Certificate of education	57.89	34.56	14.63	2.30	0.92
Degree	0.00	40.00	20.93	1.66	1.03
Women					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	56.41	46.97	34.33	11.04	1.12
Lower secondary school certificate	43.43	31.14	21.90	11.49	5.41
Certificate of education	68.27	41.64	25.13	8.75	2.22
Degree	0.00	50.00	26.80	4.49	0.00
Total					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	47.15	34.34	22.96	6.72	1.42
Lower secondary school certificate	35.97	24.38	14.60	5.68	2.99
Certificate of education	64.60	38.59	19.74	4.80	1.30
Degree	0.00	46.67	24.04	2.78	0.82
	Central/Northern Italy				
Men					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	28.00	12.50	8.22	2.40	0.88
Lower secondary school certificate	18.62	10.58	4.72	1.79	2.27
Certificate of education	40.63	19.44	7.23	1.30	0.00
Degree	0.00	0.00	12.28	1.18	0.00
Women					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	61.54	54.55	47.83	19.31	3.51
Lower secondary school certificate	64.34	55.96	41.46	23.30	11.11
Certificate of education	89.47	72.86	50.00	15.59	0.00
Degree	0.00	100.00	39.39	7.22	0.00
Total					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	52.94	42.97	30.32	11.71	2.49
Lower secondary school certificate	56.30	44.44	26.39	9.80	3.85
Certificate of education	87.10	68.16	39.02	8.64	2.17
Degree	0.00	83.33	38.71	4.50	0.00
	Southern Italy				
Men					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	49.15	36.90	22.94	8.61	2.17
Lower secondary school certificate	50.51	37.50	19.82	5.79	2.33
Certificate of education	83.33	62.35	29.47	4.24	3.33
Degree	0.00	50.00	37.93	2.56	0.00
Women					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	61.54	54.55	47.83	19.31	3.51
Lower secondary school certificate	64.34	55.96	41.46	23.30	11.11
Certificate of educanon	89.47	72.86	50.00	15.59	0.00
Degree	0.00	100.00	39.39	7.22	0.00
Total					
No qualifications or primary school certificate	52.94	42.97	30.32	11.71	2.49
Lower secondary school certificate	56.30	44.44	26.39	9.80	3.85
Certificate of education	87.10	68.16	39.02	8.64	2.17
Degree	0.00	83.33	38.71	4.50	0.00

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

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Table 10: Duration of job-seeking
(Percentage figures)

	1983		1989	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Up to 2 months	4.40	2.80	3.30	2.10
More than 1 year	60.70	62.90	75.80	78.30
More than 2 years	27.30	34.20	54.10	56.90
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: IRES calculations using EUROSTAT data

Table 11: Average duration of job-seeking, by gender, age, level of education and declared occupational situation (in months)

Level of education	Men				Women				Men and women			
	14-24	25-29	>30	Total	14-24	25-29	>30	Total	14-24	25-29	>30	Total
Unemployed												
No qualifications												
Primary school certificate	11	12	13	12	10	9	10	10	11	11	12	12
Lower secondary school certificate	10	14	13	12	11	12	12	12	11	13	13	12
Certificate of education	12	16	15	14	12	16	15	15	12	16	16	15
Degree	14	19	18	18	5	11	12	12	8	13	15	14
Total	11	24	13	13	11	14	13	12	11	14	13	12
Level of education	**Men**				**Women**				**Men and women**			
	14-24	25-29	>30	Total	14-24	25-29	>30	Total	14-24	25-29	>30	Total
First time job-seekers												
No qualifications												
Primary school certificate	26	45	49	35	28	41	40	34	27	43	45	35
Lower secondary school certificate	23	46	51	29	25	37	39	28	24	42	45	28
Certificate of education	21	42	49	29	23	42	42	29	22	42	45	29
Degree	16	17	27	21	16	21	35	25	16	19	32	23
Total	23	41	47	29	24	37	40	28	23	39	44	29
Level of education	**Men**				**Women**				**Men and women**			
	14-24	25-29	>30	Total	14-24	25-29	>30	Total	14-24	25-29	>30	Total
Other job-seekers												
No qualifications												
Primary school certificate	13	20	26	23	23	30	28	28	22	30	28	27
Lower secondary school certificate	13	27	29	15	19	26	28	24	18	26	28	23
Certificate of education	21	27	27	23	20	29	32	26	20	28	31	25
Degree	11	11	6	9	20	20	31	27	17	18	28	24
Total	17	26	26	20	20	28	29	26	19	27	28	25
Level of education	**Men**				**Women**				**Men and women**			
	14-24	25-29	>30	Total	14-24	25-29	>30	Total	14-24	25-29	>30	Total
Total												
No qualifications												
Primary school certificate	23	28	21	22	25	30	25	25	24	29	23	24
Lower secondary school certificate	20	33	27	24	22	27	27	24	21	30	27	24
Certificate of education	21	36	35	26	21	34	33	26	21	35	33	26
Degree	15	17	25	20	16	19	30	23	16	18	28	22
Total	21	32	25	24	22	30	28	25	21	31	27	25

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

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Annex 2

Exclusion from school: data

This second annex comprises a set of tables containing data concerning the extent of and trends in exclusion from school.

The figures that emerge from the tables indicate some of the features of the selection process at compulsory school and at upper secondary school that is, especially in the former case, responsible for the emission into the labour market of an enormous number of young people who are prematurely excluded from the education system and have little chance of finding a job.

The figures are unequivocally serious.

In particular:

- (see Tables 1, 2 and 3) if we analyse the figures for 1971/72, 1979/80 and 1986/87, we can see that there was a marked drop in the number of pupils repeating a year at primary school. It should be pointed out that the South accounts for 45.0% of all Italian primary-school pupils and 69.7% of all those repeating a year at this level;

- (see Tables 4, 5 and 6) if we analyse the figures for 1971/72, 1979/80 and 1986/87, we can see that, by contrast, there was a marked increase in the number of pupils repeating a year at lower secondary school. It should be pointed out that, in this case, the South accounts for 41.5% of all Italian lower-secondary pupils and 51.7% of all those repeating a year at this level;

- (see Tables 7, 8 and 9) if we analyse the figures for 1971/72, 1979/80 and 1986/87, we can see that there was a marked increase in the number of pupils repeating a year at upper secondary school. In this case, the figure for the South is in line with that for the whole country;

- (see Tables 10, 11 and 12) with respect to primary-school education in Italy in 1986/87, 4.8% of children attended a school in temporary premises, whilst 4.1% attended a second or third shift. These figures increase if we look at the South alone, where they rise to 8.3% and 8.9%, respectively. This means that 78.2% of children attending primary school in temporary premises are in the South, and that the South accounts for 98.5% of all second and third shifts at this level;

- (see Tables 13, 14 and 15) with respect to lower secondary education in Italy in 1986/87, 8.9% of children attended a school in temporary premises, whilst 1.3% attended a second or third shift. These figures increase dramatically if we look at the south alone, where they rise to 16.3% and 3.0%, respectively. This means that 76.1% of children attending lower secondary school in temporary premises are in the South, and that the South accounts for 96.3% of all second and third shifts at this level;

- (see Tables 16, 17 and 18) with respect to higher secondary education in Italy in 1986/87, 14.6% of children attended a school in temporary premises, whilst 1.5% attended a second or third shift. Again, these figures increase if we look at the South alone, where they rise to 23.8% and 2.9%, respectively. This means that 62.5% of children attending higher secondary school in temporary premises are in the South, and that the South accounts for 73.3% of all second and third shifts at this level.

Although it is obviously not possible to establish a direct correlation between the

figures on selection and those referring to school buildings, it is nonetheless evident that lack of material resources is a factor that causes difficulties and poor results in education.

Table 1: Primary school (absolute figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	2,028,647	75,586	1,862,410	12,056	1,324,603	7,486
Central Italy	850,942	32,333	789,472	4,063	610,525	2,845
Southern Italy	2,033,793	181,678	1,854,684	43,285	1,583,188	23,817
Italy	4,913,382	289,597	4,506,566	59,404	3,518,316	34,148

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 2: Primary school (percentage figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	100.00	3.73	100.00	0.65	100.00	0.57
Central Italy	100.00	3.80	100.00	0.51	100.00	0.47
Southern Italy	100.00	8.93	100.00	2.33	100.00	1.50
Italy	100.00	5.89	100.00	1.32	100.00	0.97

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 3: Primary school (percentage figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	41.29	26.10	41.33	20.29	37.65	21.92
Central Italy	17.32	11.16	17.52	6.84	17.35	8.33
Southern Italy	41.39	62.73	41.16	72.87	45.00	69.75
Italy	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 4: Lower secondary school (absolute figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	995,210	58,356	1,249,446	79,754	1,093,662	70,802
Central Italy	436,044	31,647	525,052	41,006	487,254	38,361
Southern Italy	855,596	79,852	1,125,722	119,216	1,124,024	116,968
Italy	2,286,850	169,855	2,900,220	239,976	2,704,940	226,131

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 5: Lower secondary school (percentage figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	100.00	5.86	100.00	6.38	100.00	6.47
Central Italy	100.00	7.26	100.00	7.81	100.00	7.87
Southern Italy	100.00	9.33	100.00	10.59	100.00	10.41
Italy	100.00	7.43	100.00	8.27	100.00	8.36

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 6: Lower secondary school (percentage figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	43.52	34.36	43.08	33.23	40.43	31.31
Central Italy	19.07	18.63	18.10	17.09	18.01	16.96
Southern Italy	37.41	47.01	38.82	49.68	41.55	51.73
Italy	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 7: Upper secondary school (absolute figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	699,149	43,831	1,000,600	67,724	977,993	87,768
Central Italy	368,161	27,736	510,120	41,461	498,129	44,934
Southern Italy	664,868	59,118	886,147	76,153	922,218	82,132
Italy	1,732,178	130,685	2,396,867	185,338	2.398,340	214,834

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 8: Upper secondary school (percentage figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	100.00	6.27	100.00	6.77	100.00	8.97
Central Italy	100.00	7.53	100.00	8.13	100.00	9.02
Southern Italy	100.00	8.89	100.00	8.59	100.00	8.91
Italy	100.00	7.54	100.00	7.73	100.00	8.96

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 9: Upper secondary school (percentage figures)

	1971/72		1979/80		1986/87	
	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters	Pupils	Repeaters
Northern Italy	40.36	33.54	41.75	36.54	40.78	40.85
Central Italy	21.25	21.22	21.28	22.37	20.77	20.92
Southern Italy	38.38	45.24	36.97	41.09	38.45	38.23
Italy	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 10: Primary school, 1986/87 (absolute figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	1,324,603	7,486	14,688	318
Central Italy	610,525	2,845	22,097	1,838
Southern Italy	1,583,188	23,817	132,133	141,641
Italy	3,518,316	34,148	168,918	143,797

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 11: Primary school, 1986/87 (percentage figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	100.00	0.57	1.11	0.02
Central Italy	100.00	0.47	3.62	0.30
Southern Italy	100.00	1.50	8.35	8.95
Italy	100.00	0.97	4.80	4.09

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 12: Primary school, 1986/87 (percentage figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	37.65	21.92	8.70	0.22
Central Italy	17.35	8.33	13.08	1.28
Southern Italy	45.00	69.75	78.22	98.50
Italy	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 13: Lower secondary school, 1986/87 (absolute figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	1,093,662	70,802	19,633	347
Central Italy	487,254	38,361	37,735	907
Southern Italy	1,124,024	116,968	183,050	33,035
Italy	2,704,940	226,131	240,418	34,289

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 14: Lower secondary school, 1986/87 (percentage figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	100	6	2	0
Central Italy	100	8	8	0
Southern Italy	100	10	16	3
Italy	100	8	9	1

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 15: Lower secondary school, 1986/87 (percentage figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	40.43	31.31	8.17	1.01
Central Italy	18.01	16.96	15.70	2.65
Southern Italy	41.55	51.73	76.14	96.34
Italy	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 16: Upper secondary school, 1986/87 (absolute figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	977,993	87,768	64,539	4,799
Central Italy	498,129	44,934	67,080	5,062
Southern Italy	922,218	82,132	219,388	26,979
Italy	2,398,340	214,834	351,007	36,840

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 17: Upper secondary school, 1986/87 (percentage figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	100.00	8.97	6.60	0.49
Central Italy	100.00	9.02	13.47	1.02
Southern Italy	100.00	8.91	23.79	2.93
Italy	100.00	8.96	14.64	1.54

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Table 18: Upper secondary school, 1986/87 (percentage figures)

	Pupils	Repeaters	Temporary premises	2nd/3rd shift
Northern Italy	40.78	40.85	18.39	13.03
Central Italy	20.77	20.92	19.11	13.74
Southern Italy	38.45	38.23	62.50	73.23
Italy	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: IRES calculations using ISTAT data

Target groups analysed in the twelve Member States

B	1)	Young people in Charleroi and Wallonian Brabant
	2)	Young people in Brussels
DK	1)	Locked-in, unemployed young people
	2)	Young people dropping out or changing course in the education system
D		Girls and young women when choosing an occupation
GR	1)	Young people who leave school without completing compulsory education
	2)	Young women with no skills training
E	1)	Young women in the autonomous community of Madrid whose chief activity is domestic work in their own homes
	2)	Young people of both sexes affected by industrial reconversion on the left bank of the Bilbao estuary
F	1)	Young people in initial training
	2)	Young job seekers
IRL		Rural disadvantaged youth Case study 1: North Mayo Case study 2: North-West Connemara
I		Low skilled young people
L	1)	Young people in the 9th class of upper secondary technical education
	2)	Young people with supplementary education in the last year of compulsory schooling
NL		Young drifters
P	1)	Young people in their 9th school year
	2)	Young people who have completed their 9th school year and are attending vocational training schools
	3)	Young people with or without school leaving certificate attending alternative training courses
UK	1)	Young people in full-time employment
	2)	Homeless young people

CEDEFOP - European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Determining the need for vocational counselling among different target groups of young people under 28 years of age in the European Community
Low-skilled young people
- Italy -
Saul Meghnagi

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Following a brief overview of the career guidance systems in their countries, the authors of the reports describe a number of target groups of young people under 28 years of age, their economic, social and cultural backgrounds and the problems posed by the transition from school to working life.

A total of 21 target groups from the whole spectrum are examined, ranging from young people with favourable conditions for transition to the most disadvantaged.

A comparison is made between the need for career guidance, the demand coming from these groups and the current offer. The conclusions drawn in the summary report (deficit analyses) provide indications for designing future action programmes at EU level.

Particular attention is paid to mobility and the readiness of young people in this age group (PETRA II) throughout the EU Member States.

National report

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